The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam

A comparative study of the late medieval and early modern periods

Ali Anooshahr

Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern History

The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam

The Ghazi Sultans were frontier holy-warrior kings of late medieval and early modern Islamic history. This book is the first comparative study of three particular ghazis in the Muslim world at that time. It demonstrates the extent to which these men were influenced by the actions and writings of their predecessors in shaping strategy and the way in which they saw themselves.

Using a broad range of Persian, Arabic and Turkish texts, the author offers new findings in the history of memory and self-fashioning, demonstrating thereby the value of intertextual approaches to historical and literary studies. The three main themes explored include the formation of the ideal of the ghazi king in the eleventh century, the imitation thereof in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Anatolia and India, and the process of transmission of the relevant texts. By focusing on the philosophical questions of 'becoming' and 'modeling', Anooshahr has sought alternatives to historiographic approaches that only find facts, ideology and legitimization in these texts.

This book will be of interest to scholars specializing in medieval and early modern Islamic history, Islamic literature, and the history of religion.

Ali Anooshahr teaches Comparative Pre-modern Islamic History at the University of California, Davis.

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This book is dedicated to Daisaku Ikeda for showing through example the limitless possibilities of human life

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Notes on transliteration

I have used a modified Library of Congress transliteration system in this book, avoiding the use of macrons in the names of individuals and titles of books, but using them in glossed words. Four languages are transliterated in this book: Persian, Arabic, Chagatay and Ottoman Turkish. The same name or word, depending on what languages it occurs in, will be rendered by a slightly different system. The name of authors and titles of their books will follow the LOC system much more strictly, leading to some variance between the bibliography and the text.

Introduction

When in 1021 CE Abu Nasr al-'Utbi wrote his *Yamini* – a rhetorical tour de force in Arabic and one of the earliest dynastic histories in Islamic historiography – he railed in his preface against legendary tales which aimed at 'exaggeration, frightening, mystification, and provoking astonishment, without any truth that the eye might witness, or that might be proven by demonstration'.[1] Yet, a few pages later, when he began his narrative of the rise of his patron's house (the Ghaznavids r. 994–1186 CE) on the frontiers of Muslim-controlled land and non-Muslim India (roughly in southeastern modern Afghanistan as well as Pakistan), he included the following description about the bizarre event that brought victory to the Emir Sebüktegin against the Indian king Jaipal:

> There was in the vicinity of those battlefields, near the infidels, a mountain called mount Ghuzak, from which the eagle would cast down his gaze, and lower still, the army of clouds would assemble. Within it lay swells and hollows, bends and curvatures. In one of its ravines there was a clear fountain of water, pure as by Hanafi law,[2] in which there was no dirt or impurities. If any filth were thrown into it, the sky would blacken, great storms would rage, the elevations and depths would grow dark, and the neighborhood would be filled with horrible cold blasts, until one should see before his eyes red death and the greatest chastisement truly and clearly. The emir commanded that filth of some kind be thrown into it on purpose. Immediately, there arose the horrors of the day of resurrection upon the licentious infidels, and thunderbolts and blasts followed relentlessly. Violent wind closed in on them from every side, and the sky spread the canopy of hailstone and cold upon them. Windstorms of the ages and dust clashed upon them, and [the Indians] could not see the path by which to fly.[3]

Half a millennium later, when Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur (d. 1531), a descendant of the Central Asian world-conqueror Timur (Tamerlane) and founder of the Mughal Empire, captured the city of Ghazna, he did all he could to find this volatile spring. He wrote in his memoirs:

> It is recorded in books that if any filth and dirt is thrown into a certain spring in Ghazni, a tumultuous storm breaks out at once, and rain and hail will fall. I had read in a history book that when the Ray of India laid siege to Ghazni, Sebüktegin ordered filth and dirt thrown into the spring. A violent hailstorm followed, and the enemy was repelled. No matter how much I searched for the spring in Ghazni, no sign of it could be found.[4]

Sure enough, 'Utbi and other early eleventh-century authors serving under the Ghaznavids had created a heroic role model – that of the *ghazi* (roughly 'holy warrior') king – in their descriptions of the campaigns of their patrons in India. Of course the Ghaznavids had not been the *first* ghazi kings. There existed a whole genre of literature remembering figures as early as the prophet Muhammad for having undertaking raids remembered as ghaza (or, in the older parlance, *ghazw* and *maghāzī*). What was important about the specific Ghaznavid model was that their texts proved of long-lasting popularity during the Middle Period of Islamic history (between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries). Not only did later chroniclers draw on Ghaznavid literary prototypes in composing their own works of history; even later, army leaders, particularly in the frontier regions of India and Anatolia, read them as sources of information and inspiration for modeling the successful career of ghazis and heroes of old.

When, for example, Babur sought his fortunes in India, he had entered a space that he had never seen before. He needed signs by which he might orient himself to his new environment. For this he turned to works of history such as 'Utbi's *Yamini*. But these compositions did not merely identify a locality (say, a river) for Babur. They also described it as the site of a battle by a previous Muslim ruler. Thus, when he felt the need to associate himself with such political and heroic pedigree, Babur too would seek to fight a battle there in order to evoke the memory of the ghazis of yore. A comparative analysis of the early Ottoman sultans in Anatolia (especially Murad II, d. 1451) shows a similar phenomenon. This book will analyze the formation of this specific image under Mahmud of Ghazna, trace its transmission into Anatolia and India, and shed light on its reformulation by the early Ottomans (Sultan Murad II) and Mughals (Babur) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. What is being undertaken here is not a history of ghaza for all time, nor a history of religiously inspired violence, jihad, or the crusades. There exists much recent scholarship on all these topics to which the reader might refer.[5] Rather, only three ghazi kings will be scrutinized and their individual definitions of ghaza and self-fashioning as ghazis studied.

Nevertheless, despite limiting the study to three people, the scope of the inquiry is certainly very broad, although by no means comprehensive – let alone exhaustive. All the same, such an approach is advantageous since scholarship has mostly (though not entirely) avoided grappling with the topic of ghazi kings in an extensive and comparative manner. Instead, issues

relating to ghaza within the period under investigation have been dealt with tangentially, or alluded to in several academic subfields.

On the Indian frontier, Babur has been the subject of a number of biographies, most recently by Stephen Dale (*The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Babur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India*, 2004). However, many of these do not penetrate beyond a relatively superficial prying into the prince's memoirs, and even Dale's book, in spite of its numerous contributions, limits itself methodologically to providing a commentary on the text. Moreover, when it comes to the role of ghaza, so obviously crucial to the prince's self-presentation, scholars merely brush it aside as an anachronistic irrelevance. Dale, for instance, considers Babur's 'ghazi rhetoric' a mere 'ritualistic religious observance' which presumably had little bearing on his situation in South Asia.[6] Jos Gommans, the Mughal military historian, dismisses Babur's image of a bearded ghazi as a 'caricature' that was a bit out of date in the sixteenth-century context, and even feels the need to remind his readers that Babur and other ghazis were not 'modern-day fundamentalists'.[7] Mohibbul Hasan and R. Nath too have reassured us that, in spite of Babur's ghazi language, he was no religious fanatic.[8] The reasons for the scholarly evasiveness in dealing with such an essential element of the *Baburnama* (and no reader of the text can fail to see the climactic role of ghaza in the memoirs) lie first and foremost in the obvious discomfort of modern historians regarding the association of their field of study with popular stereotypes of certain strands of political Islam. Naturally, retrojecting contemporary political labels to the sixteenth century does not really help us understand the period. But the solution is neither to dismiss the concept of ghaza (in face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary) nor to try to render it 'safe'. Rather, one must engage each occurrence of the word analytically and with due sensitivity.

A still more fundamental problem that underlies modern scholarly reaction to and dismissal of Babur's ghaza is rooted in the failure to distinguish Babur the author from Babur the character of the memoirs – in other words, neglecting to consider the prince as an artist and composer of a work of literature. Even scholars who are aware of this important distinction still fail to deal with it satisfactorily in their analyses. Dale, for instance, correctly states in the introduction to his recent study,

> [Other biographies of Babur] revel in their delight at discovering such an unexpected treasure and have largely taken it at face value, mining its pages for Babur's wonderfully pithy observations or for "factual" information about the culture and society of the period.[9]

However, he himself seems to succumb to the lure of Babur's prose in many parts of the memoirs, to the point of flatly contradicting himself in the section of the *Baburnama* when the prince vividly portrays his drinking parties. Here, Dale writes, regarding one of these scenes, 'If Babur had been

writing a more artful history rather than a chronicle of events he might have used [this incident] as a literary prologue and psychological catalyst for the dramatic decision he made a few days later to renounce wine'.[10] Dale's unexpected refusal to heed his own warning and engage in a literary analysis of the *Baburnama* (as opposed to mining it as a chronicle of events full of wonderful observations largely taken at face value) is closely related to his indifference to Babur's ghaza.

Any biographer of Babur who simply follows the *Baburnama* is in danger of writing the biography of a potentially fictional character. Ironically, with this insight, one may be able to gain a closer understanding of the historical Babur. Judging the text as a straightforward historical source, one may accept or reject critically whether or not a portion of the information contained therein (say, about his ghaza) reflects reality. But reading the memoirs as a kind of novel or even a script for performance, even the untruthful sections gain immense significance. It does not matter whether or not Babur's self-presentation as a ghazi was heartfelt or hypocritical. Rather, what matters is that something about his new environment in India had driven him to wear this new masque, or to genuinely (in his own eyes) be one. Also important is how he went about doing this. How does an individual fashion and present himself anew, here as a ghazi? The aim here is to move away from the implicit question (heretofore operating in all previous studies of the text) 'who or what was Babur?', answered by a list of historically possible categories as judged by the modern scholar, to the explicit question 'What did it mean for Babur to be in a certain way?', here as ghazi, as expressed in the text itself. We should ask not 'was a Babur a real ghazi?', but 'what did it mean for him to *present himself as* or to *become* a ghazi?' Such a question regarding the meaning of the *ways* in which Babur is and appears in his text (as opposed to *what* he is) is a much more fundamental question. One no longer needs to come up with a standard but abstract definition of the category of ghazi and then judge Babur's behavior to see whether it fits the term. Rather, one can observe what it meant for Babur personally to orient himself toward such categories. The categories themselves may be contested or open to interpretation, but the fact of Babur's self-direction towards them is not. The goal in this book has been to extract from Babur's writings insights into the question of what it meant to become a ghazi that no independent or even comparative historiographical tradition has done before.

This will be attempted both by a close reading of the memoirs (guided by a shift of questioning indicated above) as well as by comparing the Mughal prince with his historical role models, namely the early Ottomans (possibly Murad II) as well as Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. Such an undertaking will be a more daunting task, since the latter monarchs did not leave their own autobiographical memoirs to posterity – at least not strictly in that form. Yet, to be consistent, one must still compare Babur's self-fashioning as ghazi with Mahmud and Murad's individual self-fashioning as ghazis. However, one must first consider briefly the relevant scholarship on Ghaznavid and Ottoman ghaza as well.

Regarding Mahmud of Ghazna as ghazi, the basic statements were made by W. W. Barthold in his *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (first translated into English in 1928). Barthold believed that ghaza in tenth-century Central Asia was the business of the uprooted poor, who would gather together in corporate organizations and would join a campaign in search of booty.[11] When Mahmud of Ghazna was established as the supreme ruler of the region, he redirected this energy into India, not out of 'religious fanaticism' or for the 'propagation of faith', but out of his desire for loot.[12] Thus Barthold viewed the motivations for ghaza in the east, especially by the Ghaznavids, as mutually exclusive. One either went for 'God', and this meant spreading the faith, or for 'gold', which signaled a cynical manipulation of religion. Moreover, Barthold did not explain how ghaza was transformed from being the business of the lower social strata to the primary identity of the greatest monarch of the east in the early eleventh century. Needless to say writing over a hundred years ago, he was not particularly sensitive to what it meant for Sultan Mahmud to orient himself to ghaza and to present and fashion himself as ghazi.

In any event, Barthold's views on Mahmud's ghazas were followed closely by historians of India. For example, in 1928 W. Haig expressed doubt as to whether '[Mahmud's] Indian raids and massacres were inspired by a desire of propagating his faith, for which they were ill adapted, [or] by avarice'[13] – thus again, the God/gold dichotomy. What made him unsure of the genuineness of Mahmud's piety was the fact that he had a large body of 'Hindu troops, and there is no reason to believe that conversion was a condition of their service'.[14]

This statement remains essentially unchallenged to this day. Bosworth's 1991 *Encyclopedia of Islam* article on Mahmud repeats Haig and Barthold's two points used to argue against the authenticity of the religious feeling behind the Indian ghaza – namely, that the motive was avarice and conversions did not take place: 'The raiding of India was thus a financial necessity ... A political annexation and the mass conversion of Hindus were probably never envisaged.'[15] Jürgen Paul, too, who has studied ghaza on the eastern frontiers of the Islamic World (without focusing exclusively on Mahmud) implies a similar dichotomy in his analysis. Paul treats ghaza as a kind of dialectic between Barthold's incorporated poor and 'states' in the region, charting the development of ghazis from isolated individual ascetics of the ninth century to much larger groups in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Various eastern dynasties, the Ghaznavids being among them, interacted with such groups differently and for diverse historical reasons. Now whereas Paul's study allows for the genuineness of religious feelings behind the actions of poorer ghazis and volunteers, his conceptualization of the state is too impersonal and idealized to seriously problematize ghazi kings such as Mahmud. One finds the usual labels of cynical appropriation or legitimation

common to the field since the time of Barthold.[16] It is only very recently that some of these basic statements have been substantially challenged. D. G. Tor, in her analysis of an older ghazi king of the ninth century (the Sistani hero Ya'qub al-Layth) has shown that many of the ghazi groups were not entirely made up of the poor, and actually boasted of membership among social elites with close connections to religious circles.[17] In light of Tor's arguments, the sharp line drawn between Mahmud and the corporate ghazis might be more indistinct than we have supposed. We can perhaps begin to take more seriously Mahmud's ghazas on the Indian frontier (which, by the way, have not been subject to careful study)[18] and confront the assumptions by which they are denied validity. Why should the religiosity of 'non-state' elements be privileged as more authentic? Why should the propagation of Islam be equaled with enforcing conversions? Why should the collection of loot stand mutually exclusive to religion? Was it not possible that establishing Islam meant to the Ghaznavids merely extending the reach of Muslims over a certain area? Is it not true that even the most abstract of Muslim legal theoreticians endorsed, on religious grounds, the seizure of property from pagans? Is it not possible that Mahmud of Ghazna's personal understanding of Islam did not match precisely with the normative sources at our disposal and involved what seems to us contradictory beliefs and behaviors?

Furthermore, and this is crucial for the present study, the scholarly cynicism vis-à-vis Mahmud's ghaza raises a difficult question about the sources in which the sultan's activity is depicted. What should one make of the rhetoric of ghaza in Muslim historians of the period? The practice has been not to engage, but to dismiss them summarily: 'Mahmud was far from being the zealous champion of the faith depicted by Muslim historians.'[19] This dismissal is particularly misguided since, as will be shown below, the image of Mahmud as ghazi king seems to have been as much the making of the sultan himself. Was Mahmud a memoirist like Babur? Was he crafting an image of himself in response to contemporary exigencies? If so, how did his self-fashioning as ghazi sultan take place? To find this out, one must wrench from various Persian and Arabic chronicles the compositions of Mahmud.

Moving along, the sources from Anatolia in many ways resemble their literary counterparts of the east. However, scholarship on ghaza follows a different path here. The modern scholarly discussion on early Ottoman Empire has been primarily a debate regarding the 'origins' and 'essence' of the Ottoman Empire. The particulars of this debate have received a thorough and critical general survey by Cemal Kafadar, Colin Heywood and Heath Lowry.[20] The fundamental points of argument come down to these issues: the early Ottomans were a state; this state had an essence or nature; the essence or nature was a kind of ideology or idea; this ideology or idea was either exclusivist (due to a driving spirit of 'ghaza' against Christians[21] or to its purely Turkish racial component[22]), or inclusivist (fluidly tribal and even shamanic,[23] or finally, and most commonly accepted today, still ghazi but with a flexible frontier air[24]). Thus, the study of ghaza and ghazis has been tangential to a broader debate regarding the origins of the House of Osman.

Leaving aside the Ottoman state and its essence or nature for the present, let us rather examine the implications of this debate for the reading of the relevant texts. Shifting away from the main thrust of the debate, one encounters a number of problems concerning the scholarly approach to the various sources. These are: (a) reading Ottoman texts merely to dismiss their value for historical reconstruction without fully engaging them as literary products; (b) using the evidence of Byzantine sources in place of Turkish ones with total disregard for the discursive nature of the former; and (c) using popular epics as the reflection of the mentality of vaguely defined peoples while disregarding the historical context and age in which these epics were collected and recorded.

To begin, while Paul Wittek (who first suggested that the early Ottomans were motivated and driven by a spirit of ghaza) has been censured for his uncritical acceptance of the 'ghazi ideology' in later Turkish histories, many of his critics have counteracted by assuming an uncompromisingly dismissive attitude towards these later compositions. This attitude is particularly dangerous, for, while skeptical of the Ottoman sources, many scholars simply turn to Byzantine authors and privilege their testimony while ignoring the discursive nature of these Greek texts. The result is a kind of 'Orientalism' as decried by Edward Said, where 'orientals' (here Turks/Muslims) are not allowed to speak for themselves and are spoken for by 'occidentals' (Byzantines/Christians).

Rudi Lindner, for example, rejected (at least in 1983) the information about ghaza contained in later imperial histories as *ex post facto* 'orthodox' retrojection of religious fantasy to a time of heterodox practice by the early Ottomans.[25] He suggested that not only were the Ottomans not proper Muslims, but that they even practiced rituals that testified to their pagan or shamanic beliefs. As proof, he cited a case of human sacrifice among them.[26] But here Lindner relied on the work of Speros Vryonis, notable Byzantinist, for this piece of 'evidence'. Vryonis had published a short article in 1971 entitled 'Evidence of Human Sacrifice Among the Early Ottomans'. Therein Vryonis had cited a passage in a fourteenth-century polemic by the Byzantine author John Cantacuzene, called *Contra Mahometen Apologia*, in which the author had accused the Turks of committing human sacrifice and questioned the validity of Islam.[27] It is selective skepticism indeed to draw attention to the ideological prejudices of Muslim historians and oppose them with 'factual' data from an unabashedly candid work of Christian polemic. Recent scholarship has shown that the charge of human sacrifice against Muslims and Saracens is very old indeed, and dates all the way back to Late Antiquity.[28] Is it not possible that John Cantacuzene, who also accuses the Turks of reviving ancient Greek polytheism,[29] was as much subjected to the forces of the orthodox discourse in which he was writing as his later Ottoman counterparts?

Lindner is by no means alone in this. Heath Lowry, who has recently published a new monograph on the matter, uses the evidence of fifteenth-century Byzantine and Italian texts as proof of the absence of ghaza (as opposed to *akın*, meaning merely 'to raid') among the Ottomans, but does not even mention by name, let alone try to enter into dialogue with, the Ottoman chronicles of the same period in which ghaza and *akın* do occur side by side.[30] Similarly, Colin Imber, who has otherwise engaged (although often in order to dismantle the narratives) fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Turkish sources,[31] contents himself on the same topic by merely noting

> It is clear from his own autobiographical details that [the Ottoman Chronicler] Aşıkpaşazade served as *akıncı* [i.e. 'raider' used alongside or synonymously with ghazi] in Rumelia between c1430 and c1450, and that much of his chronicle must have taken shape as an entertainment for his warrior companions.[32]

Why did Aşıkpaşazade use these words synonymously? At what point did ghaza enter his language? What political or cultural implication did this lexical intrusion entail? Imber does not care to ask.

It must be noted that even Cemal Kafadar, who has argued for the revaluation of ghaza among the House of Osman and its historians throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (thereby rehabilitating the reliability of the sources to an extent), takes some questionable liberties with the textual evidence. The most problematic example is Kafadar's use of popular romances and epics to gain 'an understanding of the cultural life of western Anatolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries'.[33] In other words, disregarding the age of the manuscripts and the time of the collection of these epics, Kafadar uses them as sources for reconstructing the mindset of a mass of people in an unspecified historical period that lasts two centuries. This is ahistorical. The oldest *Battalname* for example, recounting the valorous deeds of an Arab warrior against the Byzantines, exists in an early fifteenth-century manuscript (see Chapter 7). To apply the contents of this text freely for an understanding of any given point of time during a 200-year span diminishes the importance of the historical context in which the book was collected and written down. The manuscript is very much a product of the first half of the fifteenth century, and has a good deal of tantalizing detail in common with other contemporary texts produced under Murad II. It would be far more sound an approach if one were to situate it within the specific time and space in which it was produced or at least recorded.

In sum, no matter what position contemporary scholars have taken on the role of ghaza in the genesis of the Ottoman Empire, the losers have consistently been the historical sources. They have not been engaged fully, or if so, often merely in order to have their evidence dismissed. Otherwise, the historical context in which they were produced has too frequently been

neglected. All these problems are of course a direct result of a mode of inquiry that sees these texts as sources for the reconstruction of dates, events and state politics in general. They are valued first and foremost for what they reveal about the realities of the periods they purport to describe. Thus, the source-problems in the Ottoman field are fundamentally similar to those in scholarly fields dealing with Babur or the Ghaznavids. But these problems can be rectified by a shift of questioning as proposed above for the sources composed on the Indian frontier, a shift away from whether or not a given sultan was a ghazi (so seeking for *whats*) and towards *how* those sultans that clearly did call themselves ghazi *became* so. This is not to avoid the reality outside of texts, but rather to focus on a kind of reality, heretofore mostly overlooked, that they can answer – namely, how does their relationship to other documentation from the period reflect the political exigencies of the time, and what can this teach us about the self-fashioning of the individuals who wrote or commissioned them?

As stated above, this can be accomplished by a change of questioning that sidesteps the insoluble problem of a single true and finite definition of ghaza,[34] and rather focuses on the more fundamental question of how the individuals living in those periods (at least those who left a record of it behind) oriented themselves to ghaza and became ghazis. To do this, one will have to cast one's net wide and follow the trail of ghaza and its textual threads to wherever they may lead, across a vast expanse of territory and over a long period of time. Fortunately, the limits of and inspiration for such a broad investigation have already been set by a scholarly study.

In a 2001 article entitled 'Contested Territory: Ottoman Holy War in Comparative Context', Linda Darling attempts a broad survey of ghaza and its function from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries, not just in Anatolia but also in India and Central Asia. Significantly, Darling abandons the search for the essence of states and considers it rooted in a kind of nationalistic connection made between pre-modern empires and the modern republics that occupy part or all of their territories.[35] Furthermore, she takes a cue from the most influential revisionist of the 'ghaza thesis' of the early Ottoman history, Cemal Kafadar, and takes as her starting point the notion that there can never be a single definition of ghaza. Rather, the proper meaning of ghaza was contested among several members of frontier societies (tribal looters, orthodox theorists, antinomian Sufis and aspiring rulers) all over the Muslim world. Also important is the fact that Darling urges modern scholars to allow agency to historical players while acknowledging the tradition upon which they had to draw for legitimation.

This book attempts to do just that in the following way. First, in order to gain a deeper understanding, only one among the many attempts to define ghaza will be considered; that of three monarchs – although here, too, that meaning must have shifted for those persons during their lifetime and in response to varying circumstances as well as to other people's comprehension of it. So, how did pre-modern Muslim authors define ghaza and present their

patrons as ghazis? Second, to give the ghazis themselves some agency, one must see how the kings themselves struggled against the available literary models in order to fit them to their specific needs, and then contributed to this discourse of ghazi kings by adding their own texts to the genre – hence the autobiographical focus of this study. In other words, this book is primarily about self-fashioning and discourse, and secondarily about ghaza. What is sought here is being and becoming a ghazi, and not 'ghazi-hood' abstracted from human beings.

Now, while the focus of this analysis is on kings, one should not suppose that this is a history of 'great men'. As the saying goes, one does not read *Hamlet* to learn about Danish monarchy. The point of this comparison is not to equate a dry academic monograph with a masterpiece of world literature. Rather, this extreme case is meant to show that even seemingly unique cases can teach us lessons of a universal application. Babur, Mahmud and Murad II are chosen primarily because the documentation on them is fairly extensive for their periods of reign. Moreover, they seem to have played a central role in forming these records. They are certainly not people in the statistical majority, but what is hoped is that what we can learn about these men as individuals can be equally applicable (with some modification of course) to others from different socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, those who are interested in how Darling's 'tribal looters, orthodox theorists and antinomian Sufis' became ghazis may wish to apply the findings and methodology of this book if they find it appropriate or useful.

Naturally, by focusing on issues that are comparative, textual and centered on self-fashioning, the presents study pays less attention to other equally important aspects of ghaza and ghazis. Scholars more concerned with the political, social and economic history of the particular states touched upon here will miss many things that have not been addressed. These limitations are not unknown to me. On the one hand, that is the nature of any study; not every aspect of a given topic can receive equal treatment. But also relevant is that the aim here has been more geared towards coming up with new questions – indeed, a new mode of questioning – than answering old ones. Much of the connections that I point out in the sources have not, as far as I know, been pointed out before. If in the process I have been overly assertive in places, I beg the reader's indulgence. Yet, all the same, for those who do not care for an inter-textual approach to history or self-fashioning in general, I hope to have at least offered a sufficiently rigorous reconstruction of historical context that might inform or enrich individual or comparative state-centric enquiries.

But to move on to the specifics, the methodology for this analysis follows a twofold path. First, a very broad assortment of relevant sources, chosen primarily for their place in a chain of inter-reference within the texts themselves (starting with Babur's memoirs), had to be read as belonging to a particular discourse. In other words, descriptions of royal ghaza must be situated against the backdrop of the genre in which they occur. There was a

certain repetitive way of writing about ghazi kings in these texts. The image of the ghazi king was not a stand-alone figure; rather, it formed part of a triad of royal images commonly (but by no means exclusively) used in Islamic historiography of the pre-modern period to portray the rise and fall of 'states'. The first stage of the dynasty/'state' was represented by a humble soldier of the frontier (often a Turk) who would do ghaza and perform justice. The second was embodied by a mighty and glorious king enforcing security and prosperity. The third was exemplified by a corrupt ruler who had fallen into debauchery and would eventually lose his throne to a new austere Turkic frontier soldier. This triad would occur more-or-less in sequence. Thus, the issues of ghaza in Islamic historiography often involved a quarrel over the nature of a particular dynasty, as well as its stage in the cycle of kingship.

However, one must go beyond a simple classification of tropes operating in a body of writings in the Middle Period. For the authors did not exactly write in a vacuum, and many Muslim princes of this time read or listened to historical works, and being exposed to these narratives, they also played a formative role in creating their own self-image. In essence there was a dialogue between an individual monarch and the discourse in which he was operating. The result of this engagement would also be recorded and contribute further to the genre.

Thus, the findings here are meant as a contribution and challenge to Islamic historiography in general. Marilyn Waldman was one of the first scholars in the field to begin treating the chronicles not as fact-sheets but as speech acts.[36] Tayyib El-Hibri took historiography further, and claimed that pre-modern Arabic and Persian sources were not meant to provide historical facts at all but to provide lessons through their allusive powers.[37] Julie Meisami suggested that history for these authors amounted to the 'usable past': material handed down through books that could be reworked based on the contemporary political situation of a given author.[38] Most recently, Chase Robinson has tried to impose broad formal categories on early Islamic historiography and has reconstructed the social context of pre-modern chroniclers.[39] These authors, for all their important contributions, share a generally true but rather simple assumption: that the historian and the historical actor were two different people. These scholars moreover assume that texts should reflect reality (thus in some cases the need to justify the fact that they don't). The three cases presented here, namely Mahmud, Babur and Murad II, do not fit into those dichotomies. Using their writings, I have tried to show that, in their case, the textual 'usable past' would very much be related to the reality outside of texts. Indeed, in their case, the author and the historical actor are the same, and, I argue, reality would have reflected the text – not the other way around.

There are seven chapters in this book. Chapter 1 begins by analyzing Babur's relationship with literature in general. It appears that his readings deeply affected his own writings. As he was already beginning to see his life

as a re-enactment of literature, it will be inferred that he was also acting out the roles in which he was inscribing himself. This is important because as Babur entered India, he began studying the histories of that region. Thus, as he became familiar with certain archetypal ghazis of old who had raided the subcontinent before him, Babur began to imitate them in order to evoke their memory. This practice culminated in the climactic scene of the Battle of Khanua, after which Babur gained control of Hindustan and assumed the title of ghazi. What is curious is that in this he was making reference to not only the eleventh-century Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, the ghazi king *par excellence* and first conqueror of India, but even the Ottomans, possibly Murad II, whose history, entitled *The Ghazas of Sultan Murad*, contains an enigmatic parallel with Babur's memoirs.

Having discovered the identity of Babur's textual references and described the exact nature of his imitation thereof (and their interweaving in his own memoirs), Chapter 2 then places Babur's actions within the context of the rise of the Mughal Empire. Babur was forced to present himself as a ghazi king in the same fashion as the Ottomans and the Ghaznavids, because he needed to associate himself with Sunni powers of high prestige in India. Babur's Timurid heritage was a major stigma in the subcontinent, as the bloody deeds of his ferocious ancestor were censured by all Indian historians of the fifteenth century. Babur's association with the Shiite Safavids was another problem.

But how was it that Babur had managed so easily to adopt Ottoman and Ghaznavid models in Hindustan? Indeed, Babur's ability to play these roles for a north Indian body of readers suggests that the image of Mahmud was itself a highly refined and popular cultural product. Chapters 3 and 4 go back to those early years of the eleventh century to show that Mahmud of Ghazna was apparently a man very much in the style of Babur. He had carefully crafted a public image of himself by drawing on the fashionable heroic literature of the late tenth/early eleventh centuries. The ghazi king Mahmud was the amalgam of an assortment of heroes derived from the Perso-Arabic genre of 'kings and prophets' – a genre very much in vogue in Mahmud's time. But as Mahmud was manufacturing his own image as the grandiose ghazi monarch, his court historians were juxtaposing him with the image of his father as a noble and austere Turkish general who, unlike Mahmud, was sympathetic, approachable, and free from the tyrannical vices of his son. This duality of royal images becomes of tremendous cultural importance by the end of the eleventh century, and is reformulated and supplemented to create a tripartite image of kingship that underlies many historical works of the Perso-Islamic tradition down to the sixteenth century.

In the hands of the late eleventh-century statesmen and authors such as Nizam al-Mulk (the Seljuk vizier), but also the historian Bayhaqi, the ghazi king was no longer a stand-alone royal image. Nizam al-Mulk wanted kings to maintain justice and prosperity in their realms and not to be distracted by ghaza in the borderlands, which he believed should best be left to lesser sub-

ordinates. The works of Bayhaqi and Nizam al-Mulk endowed the history of dynasties with a cyclical quality, each embodied by an idealized monarch. In the first stage of the dynasty, corresponding to early youth, the family was led by a 'founder king' who was a simple and austere warrior of the frontier living in solidarity with his brothers in arms. Ghaza was often relegated to this stage. Nizam al-Mulk's ideal historical example for such a king was the slave soldier Sebüktegin, father of Sultan Mahmud. Mahmud himself exemplified the second stage of the dynasty, the climax and maturity. In this stage, a glorious king ruled a prosperous and orderly realm. Finally, in the third stage, embodied by Mahmud's son Mas'ud, the kingdom would fall to a debauched ineffectual ruler who, through mismanagement, would lose his throne to another set of austere wandering Turks, and the cycle would be restarted. Chapter 5 ends with teasing out the identical structure used for a rare chronicle of the Seljuks of Anatolia in which the thirteenth-century historian Ibn Bibi presented the last three Seljuk monarchs before the Mongol invasion in the exact manner of the tripartite rise, climax and fall of the dynasties first formed around the Ghaznavids.

This brings us up to the early Ottomans, concerning whom much has been written. But with the advantage of having uncovered and analyzed certain aspects of the discursive background of their histories, something new can still be said about them. Based on scant evidence, which however does include rather sizable chronicles in Persian (one from the beginning of the century and another from the very end), it appears that, in the fourteenth century, ghaza could also have anti-Mongol connotations, but Anatolian rulers for the most part were not keen on assuming an exclusively ghazi identity. With the invasion of Timur of Anatolia in 1402, things suddenly changed. During a spiteful epistolary exchange, Timur's Ottoman antagonist, Bayezid I, began to flaunt against Timur the ghazi credentials of the House of Osman, precisely because, he claimed, their ghaza had been directed as much against pagan Mongols (with whom Timur was equated). But Bayezid's defeat in the hands of Timur created a crisis of legitimacy for the Ottomans. It looked very much like the vanquishing of a corrupt monarch by a new band of austere and wandering warriors. The intense debate in Ottoman historiography regarding Bayezid's drinking is related precisely to this point. It was crucial, for instance, for the earliest dynastic historians (such as Ahmedi and Shukrallah) to deny that Bayezid ever touched alcohol. To recover from this crisis, i.e., to show that the Ottoman dynasty had not yet reached the third cycle, the clock had to be reset and an Ottoman sultan had to occupy the role of the ghazi sultan, which since the eleventh century had been relegated to the foundation stage (thus restarting the cycle). Chapter 6 ends at this important juncture.

In order to present himself as the ghazi king, Murad II commissioned the translation and collection of texts about ghaza. Ibn Bibi's history of the Seljuks was translated at this time into Turkish. One of the oldest folk epics of ghaza in Anatolia, the *Battalname*, was also put together in this period.

There are many more. By reading the histories of ghaza, Murad II was able to model his behavior on these older heroic figures. In this way Murad resembles not only Babur but even Mahmud of Ghazna himself, in as much as all three men crafted a public image of themselves based on historical and epic role models. The result of this endeavor turns up in a broad range of sources, including Shukrullah and Aşıkpaşazade, and in a rare text entitled the *Ghazas of Sultan Murad*, which survives in only one manuscript. By convincing people that he was a new ideal ghazi king, Murad had rejuvenated the image of the dynasty and thus began a new cycle.

As a final note, before proceeding to the substance of the book, the terminology of this study must be justified. The word *ghaza* has been retained in its own form and has not been translated as 'holy war', which when applied to the pre-modern period might be associated and confused with the crusades. Furthermore, the word *infidel* is avoided for the very same reason. This lexeme entered the English language from French, and was used primarily in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to designate non-Christians – mostly Muslim Turks. The Arabic word that is usually translated as infidel is *kāfir*, meaning (in the period under investigation) literally an 'ingrate' to some munificence by a lord, be he God (thus non-Muslims) or a king (thus rebels). Just like ghaza, the word *kāfir* also occurs as such in English. However, the English word *kaffir* has negative and racist connotations for its use by South Africans of European descent towards the indigenous population of that country. That said, the word does appear in an alternative spelling signifying the Arabic meaning correctly. British travelers in India and North Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries learned the Muslims' appellation of non-Muslims, and spelled it *caffre*. The citations in the Oxford English Dictionary are quite apt. 'He was to drive the English caffres out of India' (1799); or 'He put me in imminent danger of my life by telling the natives that I was a caffre and not a Mussulman.' (1804). This is the word that has been used throughout this book to render the Arabic *kāfir*.

1 How Babur became a ghazi

The fame of Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur (d. 1530) rests on two accomplishments – one political, the other literary. He had survived with empty hands the frantic scramble for power among his kinsmen (the descendants of Timur) in Central Asia and their final annihilation at the hands of the Uzbek Shaybani Khan in the closing decades of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth. Instead, Babur managed to get himself to India and establish the so-called 'Mughal' dynasty there – hence his political reputation. Equally important was his composition of a book, an autobiographical memoir written in Chagatay Turkic. Both the genre and his language of choice were peculiar. To write a history book on one's own life was uncommon enough before Babur, but to write history at all in Chagatay (and not Persian) was also an exceptional act. What Babur has bequeathed to posterity is the record of the thoughts of an educated prince, an uprooted wanderer and, finally, a ghazi. As such, the *Baburnama* provides the perfect medium for testing the impact and the nature of imitation of other ghazis on scripting, and self-fashioning in general.

What the memoirs reveal is striking. The memory of historical and epic heroes, but especially of former and contemporary ghazi kings, as preserved in assorted chronicles, did not merely leave its influence on the *Baburnama*. On entering Kabul (in modern Afghanistan) in the first decade of the sixteenth century, Babur began reading histories of various ghazis, and these books established as historical the places he visited, influenced his actions therein, and crept into his descriptions thereof. This most original of literary compositions is deeply interwoven with allusions to (or rather echoes of pages of) several other texts, many identifiable, and rather surprising in at least one case; surprising, because one of these books may have been a rare and unusual work of early Ottoman historiography. These texts must be identified and their interplay with Babur's words and deeds closely examined. But before doing so, one must chart a path of approach to the *Baburnama* in order to overcome an inherent dilemma of the historical method.

Theoretical foundations

In analyzing Babur's memoirs, one is often confronted with two possibilities. Either the text reflects the actions of the prince, in which case the literary references or the records of the imitations of historical figures reproduce what was actually taking place in India and Afghanistan; or it was written much later, and the actions of Babur were distorted and made to resemble the behavior of certain heroes of old. To some degree, the nature of the memoirs provides some answers to this challenge. The *Baburnama* contains examples of both possibilities. The text is divided into three sections. The first section takes place in Central Asia, and chronicles the prince's youth in the Fergana valley and Samarqand. The whole of Part One was obviously written much later, and was highly edited. The second section portrays Babur's life in Kabul. These pages are also mostly edited, but with a few notable exceptions. This suggests that Babur had probably begun writing his book while in Kabul, and managed to complete the first section and most of the second while simultaneously keeping a journal on his day-to-day affairs. The third part of the memoirs takes place in India, is very rough, and mostly resembles an unedited journal. So, one can say that what is reflected in the 'Central Asia' and 'Kabul' sections consists of later interpolations, and what is contained in the Indian sections survives in the form in which it was recorded at the same time as the actual events the book purports to describe. But we are still not freed from the tyranny of the dichotomy of text vs *hors-texte*. It is still quite possible that Babur merely recorded his deeds, even in his journal entries, as he would have wanted them to seem and not as they were, even if he had no chance to revise his notes subsequently.

But this binary opposition between 'text' and 'outside of text' is highly flawed. For one, if writing an autobiographical book is viewed as an act of self-inscription on pages, might it not be possible that this performance extended further and spilled into the world? Is it not conceivable that Babur inscribed himself on the leaves of *liber mundi*, 'the book of the world', simultaneously? Moreover, why should it be assumed that writing should reflect action and not the other way around? What if the memoirs and diary entries really served as a script, still based on what Babur had read but now deemed worthy of replication? The prince in this case could have written down what he thought he should do (say, during a battle-speech) the night before, and then gone out to perform it as an actor on the stage the following day. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, the dilemma of the historical approach rests on an arbitrary and artificial separation of reality and narrative.

As David Carr has pointed out, those who have made the greatest challenge to the relationship between (historical) narrative and reality 'out there' have all basically concluded that 'the ideas of beginning, middle, and end are not taken from experience: they are not traits of real action but effects of poetic ordering'.[1] In other words, it is generally averred that narrative is a cultural literary artifact at odds with the real.[2]

This statement could not be farther from the truth. In life, we are constantly striving, with varying degree of success, to occupy the storyteller's position with respect to our own lives.[3] We constantly see ourselves, and interpret events, in narrative terms. When someone asks us what we are doing, we are expected to come up with a story, complete with beginning, middle and end; a recounting that is description and justification all at once.[4] When we encounter events, even at a most passive stage, we interpret them and anticipate what is to come against the backdrop of a past which we have already processed in a narrative framework. To illustrate by analogy, using the German philosopher Edmund Husserl's famous example, 'the beauty of a fugue simply cannot be accounted for without consideration of the listener's expectation or even surprise (surprise is of course meaningless without having first an expectation of something other than what occurs)'.[5] The same anticipation, as derived from the myriad of narratives that people continuously internalize since childhood, affects reality as we experience it and, simultaneously, how we create reality by our actions following our interpretations. What this means for Babur is that we cannot simply place a wedge between his text and his deeds, for both were equally influenced by the narratives to which he had been exposed. His actions, *and* the description of his actions, would be equally susceptible to what he read. In sum, shedding light on the interplay of other narratives (such as the tales of ghazis) with the text of Babur's memoirs is fundamentally interrelated to understanding his actions as well.[6]

Babur and literature

First, then, if the impact of heroic and ghazi lore on Babur is to be investigated, it is necessary to take into account Babur's relationship with literature in general. Throughout his book Babur would use literary quotations, as many authors do, to express his points more clearly or to give support to a statement he made; however, he also seems to have considered literature as possessing a somewhat trans-temporal truth-value – describing events and human emotions before they would actually occur. For, when confronted with a particular circumstance, Babur would remember an appropriate literary excerpt that he thought pertained to the matter at hand. This remembrance would in turn make him behave in a manner consistent with the conceptual baggage that the specific quotation was loaded with. This means that what Babur had read and memorized would help him identify what he perceived, and then in turn would provide him with guidelines for how to act subsequently. Later, as he wrote about the occurrence, or as he revised his notes on it, with the advantage of hindsight, he would augment his descriptions with more quotations from literature. A famous passage in the *Baburnama* exemplifies this process well. It is the description of Babur's first feeling of love, which he experienced at about the age of nineteen. It reads:

> During this time there was a boy from the camp market named Baburi. Even his name was amazingly appropriate. [Verse]: *I developed a strange inclination for him. Rather I made myself miserable over him.* Before this I had never felt a desire for anyone, and neither did I listen to talk of love or affection, nor would I speak of such things ... Occasionally Baburi came to me, but I was so bashful that I could not look at him in the face, much less freely converse with him. In my excitement and agitation, I could not thank him for coming, much less complain of his leaving ... One day, during this time of infatuation, a group was accompanying me down a lane, and all at once I found myself face to face with Baburi. I was so ashamed I almost went to pieces. There was no possibility of looking straight at him or of speaking coherently. With a hundred embarrassments and difficulties I got passed him. This line by Muhammad Salih came to my mind. [Verse]: *I am embarrassed every time I see my beloved. My companions are looking at me, but my gaze is elsewhere.* It is amazing how appropriate this line was. In the throes of love, in the foment of youth and madness I wandered bareheaded and barefoot around the lanes and streets and through the gardens and orchards, paying no attention to acquaintances or strangers, oblivious to self and others. Poem: *When I fell in love, I became mad and crazed. I never knew this to be part of loving beauties.* Sometimes I went alone like a madman to the hills and wilderness, sometimes I roamed through the orchards and lanes of town, neither walking nor sitting within my own volition, restless in going or staying. [Verse]: *I have no strength to go, no power to stay. You have snared us in this state, my heart.*[7]

These lines are certainly suggestive, to say the least. It has often been noticed by modern scholarship for its stark confessional nature. But so far only Stephen Dale has drawn attention to the importance of poetry here, indicating how Babur expresses his emotions quite evocatively by filtering them through the medium of poetry.[8] This, however, brought Dale to the conclusion that in this way Babur approached the level of early modern European autobiographers of the Italian Renaissance and even Pascal. Surely the Timurid prince would have relished such comparisons. But Dale's analogies do little in positively contributing to our understanding of Babur's sentences.

The question here is, in what way does this passage exemplify the interplay of literature with Babur's thoughts and actions, as well as with his writing? It is absolutely crucial to remember that this passage belongs to the first third of the memoirs covering Babur's frenetic adolescent years in Central Asia. These pages, as stated before, were most likely written later and were heavily edited. This means that at the time of writing/editing of these parts (probably in Afghanistan or India), but while or before composing the last portions in India (the unedited journals), Babur had begun to see his life as an imitation of literary art. Specifically, the following is what he does.

Obviously, the first verse quoted above ('I developed a strange inclination for him') speaks for Babur and gives articulation to his earliest emotion of love which made him embarrassed at the time and even seems to have blocked his hand from writing about it in retrospect. So while in the prose sentence Babur mentions only the boy and the coincidence of the link between their names, it is by means of the verse quotation that he begins to confess his love or his 'strange inclination for him', as he calls it. What follows confirms and reinforces the sense of embarrassment implicit in the opening sentence, but overcome by the line of poetry. The description of his general state of confusion and mortification at seeing the boy leads to the overwhelming encounter with the object of his affection in the presence of a group of friends. Once again he makes a break out of this deadlock by means of a line of poetry that expresses his predicament: ('I am embarrassed every time I see my beloved'). But this line is different from the other poetic extracts in that it forms part of the original memory and is not a later insertion. He says expressly that this line came to his mind during the incident. So, literature not only helped Babur to express his meaning more directly, but also had a strangely prophetic function (*'ajab ḥasb-i ḥāl vāqi' boldi*), being written in advance describing events that were yet to occur. Lastly, it can be seen how, when faced with a situation, his memory would immediately search the database of his prior readings and present him with a fitting citation (*bu bayti khāṭirga keldi*).

What follows after the first few lines is a particularly revealing depiction. In a close interplay between poetry and prose, Babur narrates his behavior after this occurrence. It appears that Babur enters a mental state already formed by his reading of (Sufi) love poetry. He then acts according to the implicit prescriptions of this kind of literature (playing the role of the distraught lover who loses all care for public opinion), before describing it using a language permeated by this poetic vocabulary. Again, it must be remembered that these last lines might very well be later additions. However, for our purposes, what matters is that by the time Babur was in Afghanistan and India, composing this very episode, he had begun seeing his life through a literary lens. Whether he had always, since early youth, felt and acted in conjunction with literature is not directly relevant here.

He says that he began walking barefoot and bareheaded in alleyways and gardens like a madman, losing the distinction as well as the consideration for *self* and stranger (*öz ve ghayr*). These two states are of course the condition of being 'mad and crazed' (*bīkhud va dīvāne*, literally 'having lost one*self*' and 'crazed') in the line of poetry that ensues. The prose passage subsequent to this line, up to 'through lanes and towns', reinforces the ideas just summarized by the verse. The last prose part immediately preceding the concluding verse expands on this theme of distraught madness and wandering, but it takes its cue from the lines of verse that proceed from it. The phrase 'restless in going (*barmaq*) or staying (*turmaq*)' in the prose part parallels exactly 'I have no strength to go (*barur*), no power to stay (*turar*)' in the poem.

This passage, then, quoted above and describing Babur's first experience of love around the age of nineteen, provides a clear example of the profound role played by literature in the prince's self-perception – at least when he was writing these sections, if not at the time of the actual events. Babur would use a quotation from literature not just to give expression to an implicit point or to sum up the gist of his meaning in a passage. His readings, as they were stored in his memory, would come to his mind through associations with some particular situation with which he had been confronted. These remembered excerpts of course had come with a context, or at least were loaded with certain conceptual baggage which would in turn induce him to behave in a particular fashion – or at any rate make him interpret his actions that way later. Finally, his language of narration would bear the mark of those textual excerpts. All these points are of course immensely relevant in his performing the role of the ghazi king.

Babur and ghazi lore

A close analysis of those portions of the memoirs that betray the influence of his historical readings follows the pattern established above. On entering a new region, Babur would look for signs to orient himself in that foreign environment. These signs or landmarks would be extracted from certain books of history that he had read previously, or that had begun to consult in order to familiarize himself with his new setting. But the identification of these landmarks or signs was not a neutral act. They were not mere objects that appeared to the independent subject; they had historical events associated with them. So, for example, a river was not merely a river, it was a place where a particular ghazi sultan of a previous age had fought a great battle. By identifying the place as such, Babur would then realize that he could evoke the memory of those grim conquerors by waging his own battles there. A specific illustration from the *Baburnama* is in order.

In the year 1504, Babur left Central Asia and headed south into what is modern Afghanistan. Without much difficulty, he captured the city of Kabul and became master of the territory in the central and southern parts of that country, or, in his words, the Kingdom of Kabul and Ghazni.[9] As was his way, Babur followed his account of the conquest of this territory with a vividly detailed report on its climate, fauna and flora, as well as any particular building that caught his eye, and certain administrative information. Here, for example, is a typical sketch of a place called Nijrao near the Panjshir valley (northeast of Kabul):

> Another district is Nijrao. It is located in the mountains to the northeast of Kabul. Beyond it the mountains are all Kafiristan (land of caffres). It is a remarkably inaccessible place with abundant grapes and fruit and much wine – although it is boiled. The people drink wine, do not pray, are fearless, and act like caffres. The mountains have many pine, oak, and wormwood trees. The pines and oaks are found at lower altitudes, but not at all above Nijrao – they are really subcontinental trees. The people of the mountains make their torches from jalghoza branches, which burn like candles – very strange. In the Nijrao mountains are flying foxes, animals a bit larger than a squirrel, with membranes between their arms and legs, like a bat's wing. Another type of rodent called a muskrat is said to be found in Nijrao, but I did not see it myself.[10]

These lines, and many more like them, testify to Babur's keen eye for observing the lifestyle of the inhabitants as well as the ecosystem of a region he had visited. In the more eloquent words of one of his British Colonial biographers, '[Babur] was always observant of even the smallest masterpiece of Nature's art. The color of an autumn leaf, the hues of a tulip, the scent of a melon, sufficed to arouse his admiration and emotion'.[11] Furthermore, it can be seen that most of what he wrote about were things he had witnessed with his own eyes. Only in rare cases – here with the muskrat – would he report something he had not observed himself but had heard about from the locals. Nonetheless, in such cases he would take care to admit that he had not been able to confirm this last bit of information personally. This pattern is indeed what the reader of the *Baburnama* will encounter on page after page in the sections about various locations in the Ferghana valley, Kabul and India. As Stephen Dale has stated, such parts of the text really function as 'a gazetteer'.[12] However, there are exceptions. On reaching the city of Ghazni (or Ghazna, the capital of Sultan Mahmud the Ghaznavid), something changes. History comes into play. History, which Babur had clearly read in books, does not merely creep into Babur's description of Ghazni; it deeply colors his perception and his experience of this space. Here is how he begins writing about it:

> Another is the province of Ghazni, which some call a district. It was the capital of Sebüktegin, Sultan Mahmud, and his descendants. Sometimes it is written "Ghaznin". It was also the capital of Sultan Shahab al-Din Ghuri, who is called Mu'izz al-Din in the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* and another history of India.[13]

Whereas Babur introduced Nijrao (and other cities or districts) with a mere 'another is Nijrao' and then launched into a description, when it came to Ghazni he prefaced his observations about the city with four lines of history. He refers to two books specifically. One, the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, was written in 1260 by the justice of Delhi, Abu 'Umar Minhaj al-Din Juzjani. The identity of the second book is a mystery. However, it will soon become apparent that for a good deal of his knowledge about Afghanistan and India, Babur drew on the early eleventh-century popular history of the reign of

Mahmud, 'Utbi's *Yamini* (or the twelfth-century Persian translation of it), or other books that had copied 'Utbi for the parts relevant to the Ghaznavids and their Indian ghaza.

After introducing Ghazni, Babur went on to describe its terrain, population and ecosystem in his usual manner. Then he wrote about the buildings he had visited. These were the tombs of the Ghaznavid Sultans Mahmud, Mas'ud and Ibrahim.[14] He also visited the ruins of a dam, built by the Ghaznavids and then subsequently demolished by the Ghurid Sultan 'Ala al-Din. He says that later he sent money to repair it.[15] By rebuilding the dam, Babur aligns himself with the Ghurid and Ghaznavid sultans. He enters a special space, the historical zone that lies on top of the visible space of Ghazni. The history of the place does not merely influence his perception of it; it also establishes the place as the site of actions, some possible, others inevitable. In effect, he transcends the limitation of time and enters into an atemporal space where he is side by side with the Ghaznavids and Ghurids and involves himself in their doings. His other observations confirm this.

After visiting the tombs and the ruined dam, Babur began looking for another object, and this provides the clue for the other unnamed history text that he had read. This was 'Utbi or an intermediary that had copied the *Yamini*. Here is Babur's report in Thackston's translation. The reader should bear in mind the passage from 'Utbi's history quoted at the very beginning of this book:

> It is recorded in books that if any filth and dirt is thrown into a certain spring in Ghazni, a tumultuous storm breaks out at once, and rain and hail will fall. It was seen in a history book that when the Ray of India laid siege to Ghazni, Sebüktegin ordered filth and dirt thrown into the spring. A violent hailstorm followed, and the enemy was repelled. No matter how much I searched for the spring in Ghazni, no sign of it could be found.[16]

There is no doubt that the source of Babur's knowledge of the body of water was 'Utbi's text. Moreover, the passage also illuminates how literature affected Babur's perception of reality and his subsequent actions. Here, we see Babur remembering having read the tale of Sebüktegin's explosive spring in 'Utbi and/or those who had copied him. His recollection even echoes the vocabulary of 'Utbi (*nijāsat* and *qāẕūrāt* for filth and dirt, the string of words describing the resulting natural disasters – *tolghaq*, 'tumult'; *ṭūfān*, 'tempest'; *yaghın*, 'rain'; and *chapqun*, 'snowstorm', though these are missing from Thackston's translation). He goes searching in the surrounding countryside for this landmark. This landmark is not simply another natural curiosity; it is a sign by which he gets oriented in his space. And within this space, Babur then carries out his actions in accordance with the historical baggage that comes along with it. This space, this zone, is not a mere geographical location, an outside object that lies before an independent subject in a Cartesian way (as one might argue for other provinces which Babur merely describes). No, these specific spaces are where Babur becomes a ghazi as Mahmud was a ghazi. This is the space of ghaza. Sure enough, the events that follow confirm these points.[17]

Having become established firmly in Kabul, Babur convened a meeting to discuss possible locations for conducting a major attack:

> Several days later, the army was mustered, and persons who knew the lay of the land were summoned to scout out the surrounding areas. Some said that Dasht was good, others said Bangash was suitable, others thought India best. In consultation we decided on a campaign to India.[18]

In fact, the invasion of India was not as random as presented here. It was already to be expected from an army based in the seat of the Ghaznavids and the Ghurids and led by a general well versed in the histories of these two dynasties and their exploits. In other words, Babur's readings had identified his camp as the space from which previous ghazis had invaded India. History thus contributed to this campaign, complementing geographical or financial factors.

This trend only intensifies the deeper Babur gets into Indian territory, and to such a striking degree that he starts acting and describing his battles in the pattern of narrations of Mahmud's Indian ghaza. It has long been noted by scholars that 'Utbi's battle accounts of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in India follow a formulaic pattern (more on this in Chapter 3). A passage from 'Utbi, especially when reduced to its skeleton, shows this pattern distinctly:

> The sultan set out to do ghaza against [Thanesar] in order to lift up the banner of Islam and abolish idolatry and extirpate infidelity ... He traversed a desert never before traversed but by birds or roaming beasts, and he intersected a wilderness never before trodden upon by the feet of men ... In those desolate wastelands, they strained themselves in vain to find water to moisten their mouths, not to mention food. Finally, God showed them favor and revealed a path that led to their destination ... [There] flowed a river, the bottom of which was covered with large stones, and its banks were precipitous and sharp as arrow-tips ... The caffre was leaning against [a mountain], relying upon his elephants, swollen with the assembly of soldiers and tents ... The sultan devised a plan for some of his troops to cross the river at two fords ... A battle raged vehemently, with daggers in throats and swords in shoulders. The friends of God were entirely victorious ... All the elephants were driven to the sultan's camp ... The sultan returned along with the friends of God, with abundant spoils, all triumphant.[19]

There are six basic stages in this battle account. First, the sultan sets out with the intention to do a ghaza; second, he is hindered in his way by a natural barrier (here a desert followed by a river); third, they cross; fourth, they meet the enemy whose numerous elephants and soldiers are noteworthy; fifth, they fight and win with God on their side; and sixth, they return with more booty that they can count. Now, with this pattern in mind, let us read Babur's account of the Battle of Panipat.

In November of 1526, a full twenty-two years after his capture of Kabul, Babur set out for what turned out to be his last but most important campaign in India. While many of his previous attacks had consisted of raids and plundering, this time he managed to gain victory in two key battles and secure India for his descendants for the next several centuries. The first of these two encounters, the Battle of Panipat, was against Sultan Ibrahim of the Afghan Lodi dynasty that had been in control of most of north India. As Sultan Ibrahim was the most powerful monarch in the subcontinent (at least in Babur's eyes), this campaign took an especially symbolic significance – so much so that Babur's account of this battle follows the same episodic formula as those of Sultan Mahmud as described in 'Utbi.

Just as with Mahmud, the battle begins with Babur expressing his vow to fight. This is quite rare for Babur. He usually starts the account of his other campaigns by saying something like 'On Monday we mounted, intending to make an excursion to Laghman'.[20] However, this time the language is raised a notch or two. He writes:

> After sending a party in pursuit of Ghazi Khan, we placed our feet in the stirrup of resolve, grabbed the reins of trust in God, and directed ourselves against Sultan Ibrahim, son of Sultan Sikandar, son of Bahlul Lodi the Afghan, who controlled the capital Delhi and the realm of Hindustan at that time.[21]

Just as in Mahmud's accounts, this first episode too outlines the prince's intention.

In the second stage, Babur and his soldiers are faced with a trial of nature that they must overcome. This involves first of all a natural disaster: 'marching from Dun we came to Rupar. While we were there, it rained a lot and was extremely cold, and many hungry cold Indians perished.'[22] Afterwards, they must ford a river: 'at noon they started crossing the river and moved out from the other side between mid afternoon and evening.'[23]

If Mahmud's episodes are the models here, then something about his enemy's appearance should next alarm his soldiers. In this case, it is the loudness of the battle cries from the Lodi's camp that intimidates Babur's soldiers. 'That night in camp we heard war cries for nearly a ghari [measure of time]. The noise caused trepidation among those who had never witnessed such pandemonium.'[24]

Then follows the actual battle which, of course, by the grace of God, results in victory for Babur:

> The fighting continued until midday. At noon the enemy was overcome and vanquished to the delight of our friends. By God's grace such a difficult action was made easy for us, and such a numerous army was ground into dust in half a day.[25]

Naturally, much booty is procurred, especially treasures of incomparable worth after the capture of Delhi fort. 'Droves of elephants were caught and presented to the elephant keeper.'[26] 'Among [the jewels and gems] was a famous diamond that sultan 'Ala al-Din had acquired. It is well known that a gem merchant once assessed its worth at the whole world's expenditure for half a day.'[27]

Nor is it likely that the similarity of this narrative structure to Sultan Mahmud's episodic ghaza accounts was a mere coincidence. Babur himself finished off his report of the Battle of Panipat with a few lines that indicate who exactly he had in mind as he fought against the Lodi. He writes:

> From the year 910 [1504–5], when Kabul was conquered, until this date I had craved India ... From the time of the Apostle [Muhammad] until this date, only three *pādishāh*s (great kings) gained dominion over and ruled the realm of India. The first was Sultan Mahmud ghazi, who, with his sons, occupied the throne of India for a long time. The second was Sultan Shihab al-Din Ghuri and his slaves and followers, who ruled this kingdom for many years. I am the third. My accomplishment however, is beyond comparison with theirs [i.e., it is better]. We do not consider this good fortune to have emanated from our own strength and force but from God's pure loving-kindness; we do not think that this felicity is from our own endeavor but from God's generosity and favor.[28]

It is clear that Babur engaged in his activity in India with an eye towards Sultan Mahmud and Sultan Shihab al-Din, strikingly skipping over the most recent sack of Delhi by his own ancestor Timur (we shall return to this in the next chapter). That his sequence of events for the Battle of Panipat parallel almost exactly the episodic narratives of Sultan Mahmud's ghaza in India shows that he had read closely the historical literature of the Ghaznavid campaigns in the subcontinent. The 'work of history' or 'a history of India' which he referred to in Kabul was most likely 'Utbi's or some later text that had drawn on him very closely. It can also be said with some certainty that he must have read the 'Utbi account several times, or in any event that 'Utbi's version of events must have left a deep impression on his memory for him to have organized his own narratives around the stages of Mahmud's battles. This is not a mere textual 'influence' or 'literary device'. Rather, by reading 'Utbi, Babur understood India and looked for Indian

signs and landmarks as already mentioned in that book. One must bear in mind that he had never seen much of this land; all he knew of the subcontinent was, say, 'Utbi's portrayal of it. So the book actually formed in a specific way the space for him as well as his actions there. This does not imply that process was not self-conscious (more on Babur's agency in Chapter 2), but he did go out of his way to seek out a natural disaster, a river to ford, a monstrous horrible sign to scare his soldiers, a bloody battle for God to help him in, a fortress with unimaginable jewels in it. He looked for these because this was what he expected from the India that he had read about. And he would do ghaza there because in part his Indian sources celebrated ghaza. In other words, he had somehow realized that to be a hero in India meant to act as if South Asia was the 'abode of war', as he called it.[29]

The climax of the Battle of Khanua

The impact of ghazi lore on Babur takes a curious turn in the Battle of Khanua, his last major battle, after which Babur considered himself worthy of the title ghazi. Following Panipat, Babur described how his fortunes began to deteriorate. He admitted that because he did not manage to distribute in a quick manner the treasures he had gained, and also because of excessive heat and pestilence, his soldiers started to lose heart.[30] Soon thereafter, a local non-Muslim ruler, Rana Sanga, pulled together an army and marched against Babur.[31] As the two armies met and prepared for combat, an astrologer in Babur's camp spread word among the soldiers that their side would lose.[32]

The way Babur dealt with these challenges is significant. For one, he took an increasingly religious view of the events. He referred to his enemy Rana Sanga as 'the caffre'.[33] Also, on the eve of the battle, Babur took a vow of temperance, publicly pledging to give up alcohol and ordering drinking vessels to be smashed to pieces.[34] In the royal decree issued on this occasion, the actual author of the document, one Shaykh Zayn, compared this act to demolishing idols.[35] Clearly, Babur saw this battle as the most important and also the most symbolic of his challenges in his Indian quest. In order to quell his soldier's fears, Babur says that he summoned his commanders and *begs* (lords) and gave them the following speech:

> Begs and warriors, [verse] *whoever comes into the world is mortal. He who remains forever is God.* Whoever comes into the assembly of matter will, in the end, quaff the cup of death; and whoever comes into the way station of life will, in the end, pass from the abode of sorrow which is this world. It is better to die with a good name than to live with a bad one. Verse: *If I die with a good name, it is well. I must have a good name, because the body will die.* God has allotted us the happiness and has given us the good fortune that [in this battle] those who die will be martyrs, and those who kill will be ghazis. All must swear by God's Word [Koran] that they will not dream of turning their faces from this battle or leaving this contest or struggle while there is life in their body.[36]

Of all modern commentators, Harold Lamb, the author of popular histories in the last century, has best grasped the power of Babur's electric delivery. Lamb's words run as follows: 'Spontaneously they vowed on the Koran not to turn their faces from the enemy. Word of the vows went through the encampment. The prediction of the astrologer and the omens of defeat were forgotten for a space.'[37] Victory was their lot.

Granted, Lamb here was mostly describing the situation from the *Babur-nama*. Indeed, Babur did not even relate the details of the battle himself; rather, he quoted in its entirety the victory proclamation of Shaykh Zayn, Babur's boon companion and associate. But the centrality of the passage in the memoirs describing Khanua cannot be understated. It was after this battle that Babur finally considered himself a ghazi: 'After this victory, I had the title "ghazi" added to my seal.'[38] He also composed the following lines and wrote them at the bottom of Shaykh Zayn's victory letter: 'For the sake of Islam, I became a wanderer; I battled caffres and Indians. I determined to become a martyr. Thank God I became a ghazi'.[39]

As for the astrologer who had prophesied defeat, Babur 'cursed him hard, and felt much better afterwards'.[40] Now, as stated earlier, it is wrong to derive an abstract definition of ghaza based on normative texts and then compare Babur's activity to see whether it can be considered 'authentic' religiously inspired ghaza or a 'caricature' thereof. The fact remains that in his public self-perception, as gleaned from the description of the Battle of Khanua, Babur saw himself as finally deserving the legitimate claim of the title ghazi as shared by others whom he had read about, a fact confirmed by the numismatic evidence as well.[41]

However, before the historical literature on which Babur drew in the unfolding of these events is identified and analyzed, the peculiarity of this passage must be pointed out. The verse that Babur quotes in the middle of his speech is from the *Shahnamah* (Book of Kings) – an epic poem written by the poet Firdawsi and initially dedicated to Sultan Mahmud the Ghaznavid circa 1010; more on this later. Suffice it to say that Babur was invoking the memory of epic heroes and ghazis to encourage his troops. But there is more to it than that. What Babur is doing is called, to borrow a term from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, 'de-distancing' or *Ent-fernung*. This is a method of overcoming the barrier of time and space.

De-distancing, Heidegger explains, is a process by which the distance and remoteness of something is made to disappear.[42] For in this model, the world (and here India) is not merely an object that lies before an eternal spectator (say, as in the pose of a modern historian looking at a map); rather, it is the space in which Babur has to look around and engage in his everyday activity. In this space, what is quantifiably nearest is by no means that which has the shortest distance to a person.[43]

If modern analogies be allowed, when a man makes a phone call to his wife he is closer to her than to the person who is sitting next to him in the room; when he sees his friend down the street, he is nearer to him than the sidewalk he is stepping on. Continuing with these anachronistic analogies, what Babur is doing to overcome the effects of distance his soldiers feel, their courage melting in the unfamiliar torridity of the plains and confronted by hostile forces, is in effect to place a conference call to epic heroes and ghazis. By calling on the ghazis and the heroes of the *Shahnamah*, Babur is overcoming the pangs of alienation as caused by distance. He is bolstering his numbers by connecting with the ghazis of old. Babur was never initially and merely 'here' in India, but rather 'over there' in the space of Mahmud's ghazas or the battlefields of the heroes of the *Shahnamah*.[44] He needs to return for the sake of his soldiers who lost him and needed to be taken back.

Now if this was his method, what exactly were his sources? The verse above has not been identified until now, but it can be found in two places in the *Shahnamah*. One is in the episode entitled 'War of the Khaqan of China' where, after a desperate fight by the armies of Iran, the hero Rustam finally comes to the rescue and defeats the army of the Khaqan. The other is in the story of 'Rustam and Isfandiyar', one of most famous episodes of the *Shahnamah*. In this story, Rustam, the main hero of the *Shahnamah*, finally meets his match in the person of Prince Isfandiyar, who jousts with Rustam and overpowers him without, however, killing him. Rustam withdraws and invokes his family totem, the fantastical bird Simurgh, to his aid. The bird tries to dissuade Rustam, but stubbornly the hero persists in his desire to fight in order to save his name. Simurgh at last agrees but warns Rustam:

> Simurgh said to him, 'I will tell you the secret of the firmament out of my love for you. Whoever spills the blood of Isfandiyar, the world will turn against him. For as long as he lives, he will not be able to escape suffering, and his treasures will be lost. In this world he will have misfortune. When he dies, he will be in pain and hardship. If you accept this, then you can prepare to dominate your foe. I will perform wonders for you tonight. Your lips will be sealed from dark and desperate words.' Rustam answered her, 'I accept. Now do what you will. This world is a memory, and we shall all depart. Nothing will remain of people but the words that are spoken of them. *If I die with a good name it is well. I must have a good name, because the body will die*'
>
> [italics added].[45]

It appears that, just as with mystical or love poetry, these verses were engraved in the memory of Babur. Furthermore, in both episodes above, the verse acts as the turning point, the mark of resolve in a desperate situation that leads to miraculous recovery. When faced with Rana Sanga while his soldiers had lost hope, Babur's memory recalled this line which he then spoke to his commanders to reinvigorate their courage.

The other passage that seems to have been fresh in Babur's head is from the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* of Juzjani. That Babur knew and had read the book is certain – as seen above, he cited it for his information regarding the Ghurid sultans. Apparently, though, parts that did not relate directly to India but did have to do with ghazi activity still left a deep impression on him. The episode of Babur's giving up of alcohol and smashing drinking vessels is what is being referred to here. The relevant passage in Juzjani's book is about Saladin, and reads as follows:

> [Saladin] was a king, exceedingly great, and had performed countless ghazas and jihads. He fought with the Caesars of Rome and the caffre Franks ... Then God most high decided to assist his religion so that the authority of Islam would be promulgated at the end of times. [God] picked a servant from each royal dynasty [on the frontiers of the abode of Islam] and opened the gates of victory to the lands of the caffres by the keys of his jihad. Thus in the kingdoms of the east he designated Sultan Mu'iz al-Din Muhammad Sam Shansabani the Ghurid for the conquest of lands as far as China, and in the kingdoms of the west and Syria, Sultan Saladin Yusuf the Kurd.
>
> When the news of the enthronement of Sultan Saladin reached the kingdoms of Rome and the Caesars of Franks, an innumerable army of caffres headed for Syria and encountered Sultan Saladin before the gates of Damascus. The army of Islam was defeated, and the sultan entered Damascus in flight. The caffres camped before the gates of the city, and utter calamity befell the Muslims. Sultan Saladin gathered the populace of Damascus at a place to make them pledge to do a fight and a ghaza for repelling the caffres. He sent one of the magisterial *'ulama* [religious scholars] to the pulpit to say a few words for the promotion of jihad and for making the people desirous of ghaza. That magisterial *'ālim* [singular of *'ulama*] turned to Saladin out of honesty and said, 'Saladin, your breath smells like Satan's piss. How can your pact with God become strong and come true?' By the grace of God the forgiver, his words proved effective on the sultan's heart. He stood up, and in the hands of that *'ālim*, he repented of fermented drink and all other sins. Then the people made a pledge of jihad with him out of honest inclination, and from that very place, they set out for jihad. They all came out of the city and fell upon the caffre army. God most high sent aid, and defeat fell on the enemies of religion.[46]

Like the *Shahnamah* episode, this passage too can be associated with Babur's predicament at Khanua for its tone of desperation followed by miraculous victory. Juzjani, here writing during the disheartening years of Mongol invasion, connects the Ghurids and Saladin as instruments of divine will chosen for the safeguarding and promotion of Islam. He posits a causal relationship between the giving up of alcohol by Saladin and his victory against the caffres. An *'ālim* plays an instrumental role in the enforcement of

Saladin's vow of abstinence just as Shaykh Zayn fulfills a similar function for Babur. While reading Juzjani's history of the Ghurids in India, Babur must have internalized their being paired up with Saladin – the perfect ghazi of the west. Thus, it seems that Babur was imitating yet a third exemplary ghazi, whom he did not name, in taking his vow of temperance before the battle that, in his own eyes, earned him the title ghazi. It is, however, worth noting that even this western role model had been identified in a text (Juzjani's) that would be meaningful in India. In other words, Babur emulates Saladin only in so far as it would evoke for an Indian audience the memory of the great Syrian ghazi.

There remains a final element in this mystery that must be unraveled – i.e., the source of a particular Turkic phrase in Babur's Khanua speech. The English translation does not quite convey the aphoristic terseness and felicity of the Chagatay. The dozen words that render this phrase into English – 'those who die will be martyrs, those who kill will be ghazis' – is expressed in four words by Babur: *'ölgän shahīd, öldügrän ghāzī'*. The economy of this phrase suggests its origins in the common speech as a wise saying, an adage of sorts. The fact that the late sixteenth-century translator of the *Baburnama* employs a literal and quite awkward translation of this line into Persian (*'kushta shahīd va kushanda ghāzī'*, omitting the verb 'to be' and employing the very unnatural participle *kushanda* to render the Chagatay causative participle *öldürgän*) suggests that the saying had no equivalent in Persian which the translator could write in place of the Turkic. Beside, if this phrase was Persian in origin, Babur, who readily intersperses his prose with Persian verses, would not have bothered translating it into Chagatay. No, the origin of this phrase most likely lies outside the Persian language and literature. Here lies a potentially surprising connection, and a short detour must be taken. The conclusions reached will be by no means definite, but we might thereby make Babur's Ottoman references (which already abound in his victory proclamations) more specific, and thus the risk is worth taking.[47]

In November of 1444, eighty-two years before the day when Babur stood in Khanua, nearly 3,000 miles to the west, there gathered two armies outside a fortress on the west coast of the Black Sea, halfway between the Danube delta and the mouth of the straits of Bosphorus in today's Bulgaria. One side was led by Murad II of the House of Osman, father to Mehmed II who nine years later captured Constantinople from the Byzantines and made it the seat of the Ottoman empire for almost half a millennium. The army facing Murad was led by King Vladislav the Hungarian and his commanders Michael Szilagy as well as Vlad Drakul, who was later immortalized as Count Dracula by the legends surrounding his blood-thirsty exploits. This was the famous Battle of Varna.

The events that led to this battle as well as the actual fighting were recorded by a companion of Murad II, a man whose identity is shrouded in mystery, in a rare and obscure book whose title is generally rendered into English as the *Holy Wars of Sultan Murad Son of Mehmed Khan*.[48] The Turkish

title is *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad ibn Mehmed Han* – more literally, the 'ghazas' of Sultan Murad Son of Mehmed I. There are some very remarkable features of this book. In Colin Imber's words:

> it gives a highly detailed narrative of events, avoiding many of the rhetorical and moral clichés which typify other specimens of the 'Holy War' genre of literature. It is unusual in that the author mentions events outside the Ottoman borders.[49]

The *Ghazas of Sultan Murad* was certainly an exceptional specimen of historiography written in early Ottoman Turkish.

The account of the Battle of Varna occurs near the end of the manuscript, folios 50a through 60b (the manuscript is cut short on 65b). We learn from this narrative that the Ottoman army very quickly fell into dire straits. The two wings protecting Murad in the center were beaten and routed,[50] and King Vladislav himself led a force that hacked its way to the very heart of the Ottoman formation where Murad and a few hundred soldiers were fighting for dear life.[51]

It was at this point, so proceeds the narrative, that Murad dismounted from his horse, laid his face on the ground, raised his hands, and made a prayer to God in form of a poem in rhyming couplets.[52] When he was finished and had mounted his horse again, suddenly the battle turned. The many soldiers who had fled reassembled and defeated the 'caffres'.[53]

Now what does this all have to do with Babur and the Battle of Khanua? For one, the progression of events certainly follows that of all the other combats alluded to above – Khanua, Rustam vs Isfandiyar, and Saladin vs the Franks. In all these encounters, the heroes fall from a position of power and desperately approach total defeat. However, suddenly, through invocation of a supernatural power, be it God or a fantastical bird, the events turn and total victory over the threatening enemy is attained. Still, though, the second and third battles above are connected to Babur by suggestive textual links – namely, the echo or quotation of the relevant text in Babur's pre-battle words and deeds. Where is the quotation or textual parallel that might connect Varna to Khanua?

In the *Ghazas of Sultan Murad*, the account of the fight is interrupted several times by speeches directed by Murad or his commanders to the soldiers or to God. Their words constantly scoff at death, call for victory, inspire religious fervor, and so on. For example, at one point in the battle Şahin Paşa, commander of the left wing, stops and declares to his *beys* (lords) and ghazis:

> Here, this is the day, and this the moment! Now let us see how you fight for the love of Islam! Look ghazis, the ram is born for sacrifice. We were born yesterday, and we will die today. Here at this hour, manliness and heroism (*bahadürlük*) will be shown![54]

A little before, Karaca Bey, commander of the right wing, had called out to God in the following words, 'my lord, grant me ghaza first and then martyrdom (*şehadet*)'.[55]

Of course all these shorter speeches were foreshadowed by a longer oration delivered by Murad to his soldiers on the eve of the engagement. The author of the *Gazavat* writes that, on that night, Murad first summoned his *beys* and *paşas* (i.e., his lords and commanders) and went over the battle plans. Afterwards, the text continues, Murad summoned the infantrymen (janissaries and other lesser units) and spoke to them in order to rouse their spirits. His words were as the wellspring from which the later heroic discourses of Şahin Paşa and Karaca Bey were drawn. He encouraged them to fight for the love of Islam, to mock death, and to keep in mind the merit of ghaza and martyrdom. Murad then finished with this sentence, *'Since those of us who kill will be ghazis, and those of us who die will be martyrs* [italics added], let us reach and attain together the wishes of this world and the next.'[56] Here at last is the echo of Babur's line, in Ottoman Turkish. Murad's words are *'Öldürenlerimiz gazi, ve ölenlerimiz şehid'*. Making allowance for phonetic differences between the two Turkic languages, Babur's are the reverse and are without the possessive plural ending *-lerimiz* 'of us'; *ölgän shahīd, öldürgän ghāzī*.

What is the significance of this echo? If the parallel between the two texts were limited only to this line, one would expect that a simple colloquialism, or perhaps a 'ghazi' motto, was being repeated due to mere coincidence. But then there is the harmony of the *Gazavat* with the *Shahnamah* and *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* episodes in its theme of desperation followed by miraculous recovery. This account shares another element with Babur's in its theme of abandonment of the sultan by his beys and pashas, which is exactly what Babur warns his own begs and warriors against. In fact, Babur's entire pre-battle exhortation in which the Turkic phrase occurs parallels exactly the setting of Murad's speech to his soldiers before Varna (night before the combat, disheartened soldiers, etc.). Then there is the thematic similarity of pairing martyrdom and ghazi-hood. All of this occurs in a passage where Babur was clearly drawing on other literature as well. Perhaps, then, one might look for other possibilities than mere coincidence.

Another explanation for this textual parallel would be that both Babur and the author of *Ghazas* were drawing on a common source. That there existed the same books of history in both Anatolia and Central Asia is beyond doubt. However, most of these were in Persian. What Turkish books there were had been translated from Persian, but only in Anatolia (for example, the Ottoman translations of the eleventh-century mirror for princes *Qabusnamah* or Sharaf al-Din Yazdi's *Zafarnamah*). In other words, if the sentence under consideration was from a common source, Babur would certainly have known it in Persian (or possibly Arabic), and would have quoted it as it was without translating it.

A third possibility might posit the sentence as part of a Turkic proverb or maxim that did not occur in Persian. However, such a hypothesis rests on the assumption of the etymological and primordial connection of two related languages that by the sixteenth century had little direct contact with each other. The linguistic link between Chagatay and Ottoman Turkish would have been Persian, and this brings us back again to the absence of a similar maxim or adage, or even a calque thereof in the Persian language.

Setting aside all the above hypotheses as very improbable, there remains one more possibility. This rare and much-ignored Ottoman book, the *Ghazas of Sultan Murad*, a written excerpt of it, or perhaps even an oral account of the battle derived from it, somehow got to Babur in Afghanistan or India. Just like most other literature, having remembered it, Babur had recalled the passage to his mind when he was confronted with a very similar situation before the Battle of Khanua, and had quoted it along with the *Shahnamah* and the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*. But such a hypothesis is unheard of. As with the two examples above, books tended to be written in Iran or Central Asia, and then were taken into Anatolia. Here it seems that the trend was reversed, and a book written in Anatolia was taken to Afghanistan. Then there is the text in question. The *Gazavat* survives in a single manuscript copy, making it difficult to imagine that, of all Ottoman histories, this rarest document might have traveled all the way to Hindustan. Also, mere process of elimination is not proof that Babur had accessed this text. What positive evidence is there, even if circumstantial, that such a transaction might have taken place?

A close look at the memoirs shows that, so far as Babur was concerned, the ghazi space, as it were, was not purely Indian, and his role models were not only those who had fought in the subcontinent. There are hints in the *Baburnama* that there was always an awareness of a parallel world where warriors were engaging in ghaza. This world was Anatolia (Rūm), and the ghazis there are what modern historians call the 'Ottomans', but were known to Babur as the ghazis of Rūm.

The references to anything about Asia Minor are very few and seem unremarkable. At first glance, Anatolia (Rūm) seems to play a purely functional and practical role in the *Baburnama* – namely, as associated with trade or with military tactics. Babur, for example, mentioned Anatolia once he comes to power in Kabul. He writes:

> As the entrepôt between Hindustan and Khurasan, [Kabul] is an excellent mercantile center. Merchants who go to Cathay and Rūm [Anatolia] do no greater business. From India, caravans of ten, fifteen, twenty thousand pack animals bring slaves, textiles, rock sugar, and spices ... Goods from Khurasan, Iraq, Rūm and China can be found in Kabul which is the principal depot for Hindustan.[57]

So, the first awareness in Babur of Anatolia is in conjunction with the day-to-day affairs of trade. But it also plays a part in his orientation towards

India, the place of great riches and ghaza. Also significant is the connection of Anatolia to Kabul by road. People could, and certainly traders did, go back and forth between the two places.

The next mention is much later in India, in his clash with the Lodi. Here, too, Anatolia (Rūm) plays a practical role. One of Babur's men, Master Ali Quli, was in charge of casting cannons. Before the battle, Babur says of him, 'Master Ali Quli was told to tie [the cannons] together with ox-harness ropes instead of chains after the Rumi [Anatolian] fashion'.[58] Here again the matter is practical, but once more it is concerning the campaign in India. Specifically, it reproduces the military experience of the Ottomans.

This connection with Babur's ghaza and lessons of the Anatolians seems not to be a mere coincidence. There were actually a number of individuals in Babur's army who hailed from Asia Minor. One of was a doctor who later cured the prince of an ailment;[59] another, named Mustafa Rumi, was a cannon master, and presumably had come from Anatolia to join Babur's forces in India. In other words, there is evidence of actual physical presence of people in the army who had direct personal knowledge of the Ottomans. Mustafa Rumi employed his method before the war with Rana Sanga: 'Mustafa Rumi had made [the cannons] in the Anatolian fashion, so they were sleek and fast'.[60]

These hints finally come out to a full expression of their associative potential with Ottoman ghaza after the Battle of Khanua against Rana Sanga the caffre. Shaykh Zayn, who penned the zany victory letter for this fight, wrote at one point, 'maintaining their resolve, in the manner of the ghazis of Rūm, [the soldiers] formed a row of caissons and bound them together'.[61] Of course the artillery connection would make more sense if one should note the role of cannons in the text of the *Gazavat*. As Imber has noted, the Battle of Varna was the first encounter in which the Ottomans had become familiar with the tactic of tying cannons together, and the *Gazavat* documents this learning process.[62] Perhaps the text had served as a kind of manual for artillerymen from Anatolia.

A note on the name 'ghazis of Rūm' would not be amiss. The fact that neither Babur nor others in his camp, including Shaykh Zayn, use the dynastic designation Ottoman is significant. This is because much of Babur's information here seems to have come from books in which the term 'ghazis of Rūm' suggests a long-term continuity that would comprehend much of the history of Anatolia since the Seljuk victory over the Byzantines at Manizkert in the late eleventh century. The existence of Sultan Murad's campaign narratives, also named after his ghazas, would only reinforce this fact. Perhaps it would not be too irrelevant to recall the uniqueness of the title of this book. While most post-Constantinople Ottoman histories are dynastic histories and are titled accordingly (*Tevarih-i Âl-i Osman*), the earlier account of Murad is rather a book of ghaza, and the dynastic identity of Murad is a mere coincidence.

The continuity of the idea of Anatolian ghaza can be better seen particularly in Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* and Sharaf al-Din Yazdi's history of Timur entitled *Zafarnamah* – both texts that Babur had read. As mentioned above, Juzjani, who was writing at the time of the Mongol invasion, gave special emphasis to those kings and sultans who waged war to protect or expand the domains of Islam. Therefore, it was no accident that in the section enumerating the Seljuk Sultans of Rūm, Juzjani began with these words:

> The sultans of Rūm are of the Seljuk seed, and they have been great kings. Of them there has remained, and continues to be seen to this very day, the marks of their ghaza and jihad in the countries of Rūm and lands of the Franks, as well as goodly spots such as schools, mosques, hospices, inns, aqueducts, and charitable endowments. The accounts of the ghazas of their descendents, emirs, and kings are recoded in books.[63]

This tone continues throughout Juzjani's pages on the Seljuks of Rūm.

The relevant passages of Sharaf al-Din Yazdi's *Zafarnamah* give a sense of continuity to this history, for if Babur had read beyond the pages about India, he would have found in the narrative of Timur's campaigns in Anatolia an example of a rare moment of clemency in his ancestor's otherwise brutal manner of behavior towards defeated enemies. Timur's mercy is explained by the respect he was quoted as saying to have had for the holy wars of the ghazis of Rūm. The relevant episode takes place in 1402, right after the account of the defeat of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I (the grandfather of Sultan Murad II). It reads as follows:

> Of those victorious soldiers who had gone after the runaways to seize them, Sultan Mahmud Khan reached Bayezid, captured him, and sent him that instant to [Timur]. Now when the lords of the Government-With-Everlasting-Fame brought the Caesar of Rūm handcuffed at bedtime to the court of the World-Protector, the vein of royal magnanimity began to stir, and the defender of compassion commanded that he [Bayezid] should be brought respectfully and with untied hands. Thus, as Bayezid attained the fortune of the glorious audience, [Timur] met his entrance with honor and deference, sat him beside himself, and gave voice to his rare-eloquent, jewel-bestrewing tongue in the mode of rebuking but in the way of gentleness and courtesy, and said, 'Although the affairs of the world are absolutely of the will and power of God, and no one has in fact any choice or ability, nevertheless you only have yourself to blame for this evil that has befallen you.
>
> If your harvest is thorns, you are the one who planted.
>
> If it is soft like cotton, you are the one who carded.
>
> Several times did you transgress your limit, and forced me to turn with vengeance for the sake of retribution. But I tolerated it for the sake of the ghaza against the caffres which is undertaken in this land, and I

> accommodated you with concord and harmony as far as it was the duty of being a Muslim and a benevolent person. I had in mind that if you should listen to advice and come through the door of obedience and restraint, then I would assist you and give you aid in whatever you should need, be it money or men. So that in search of power and glory, you would be able to undertake the practice of ghaza, and pierce with the sword of jihad the polytheism of irreligious people who are in the flanks and sides of the land of Islam.[64]

There are several important points to note in this passage. The Ottomans are referred to as the 'ghazis of Rūm', and this appellation seems to be what saved them from excessive violence at the hands of Timur. There is no mention of a change of dynasty. One might think (and Babur probably did) that these are the same Anatolian ghazis of the seed of Seljuk, as Juzjani called them. It should also be noted how the land is characterized as the space of ghaza. People who lived there derived their primary identity in the eyes of Timur/Yazdi from performing ghaza. Finally, it can be seen that there exists a sense of camaraderie of frontiers, 'flanks and sides of the land of Islam', among ghazis both in Juzjani's *Tabaqat* as well as in the *Zafarnamah* (where, by the way, several pages of quite extravagant prose portray graphically Timur's own Indian ghaza). This connection would certainly not have escaped Babur's notice.

In the final analysis, it remains uncertain how exactly, if at all, the *Gazavat* had got into Babur's hands. Yet, regardless of whether or not one can prove this tantalizing possibility, it is clear that knowledge of the ghazis of Rūm, as well as the physical presence of Anatolians in Babur's army, forms part of the package of ghazi tradition that Babur had in mind during his own activity in India. The Ottomans were perhaps not as influential as the Ghaznavids, but were important nonetheless. It might be argued, then, that the idea of the Ottomans as the ghazis of Rūm was by no means alien to Babur. He knew about the trade with Anatolia, he had gunners from Asia Minor serve in his army, and he had read about them in books that he named (such as Yazdi's *Zafarnamah*).

To sum up then, literature in general had a profound function in Babur's life. His readings would help him recognize and order events in his life, and would in turn serve as script for his actions in response to a particular situation. This can be seen in more mundane affairs, such as in the interplay between his youthful infatuation and amorous poetry. But historical and heroic literature, particularly that which emphasized the battles of ghazis such as Saladin, the Ghurids, the Ghazis of Rūm (Seljuk and Ottoman) and, especially, Mahmud the Ghaznavid, shaped his thoughts and deeds – his self, actually – when he entered the environs of India. This literature was for Babur the gateway to a space that overlay the lands from the Hindukush mountains to the Gangetic plains. When he embarked on his tremendous adventures in this territory, he was in effect as much in a literary space of

ghazis and ghazas. His experience of the place was conditioned by these accounts, his actions were informed by them, and his language of description bore their mark. Thus, having determined the relationship between Babur and literature, it is time to scan more broadly, placing Babur in his historical context in India and Central Asia during the closing decades of the fifteenth century and the early years of the sixteenth. The following chapter will do just that.

2 Disclaiming Tamerlane's inheritance, and the rise of the Mughal Empire

There is little controversy over the origins of the Mughal Empire – barely any at all compared to that of the near-contemporary Ottomans. Relying for the most part on Babur's memoirs, modern scholars agree that this adventurous descendant of Timur came down the mountains of Central Asia, unleashed a squall of gunpowder upon the local Muslim and non-Muslim lords of north India, and conquered the territories that became the base for the later empire-building efforts of his grandson Akbar.[1] In addition to his territorial gains, Babur is moreover credited with bequeathing a Timurid/-Turco-Mongol cultural and political legacy that served as a means of legitimacy and pride for his descendants.[2]

This scholarly consensus holds sway in spite of the fact that more recent scholarship has unearthed incongruities regarding the foundations upon which it is based. For one, Babur's all-important association with Timur is inexplicably hushed up in the parts of the memoirs that detail the prince's occupation of Hindustan. Instead, Babur conspicuously presents himself as a ghazi in the manner of the Ottomans and Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. Yet, as stated in the introduction, modern scholars generally dismiss Babur's ghazi rhetoric.

De-emphasizing the role of gunpowder, the second foundation sustaining the theory of the genesis of the Mughal Empire, dates back to even earlier. The views of those historians who had argued for the occurrence of a military revolution in early modern Eurasia have been criticized as too much indebted to technological determinism.[3] In Babur's case, the prince himself testifies that his use of cannons in battle was actually quite minimal.[4] Moreover, the Mughals were not the only ones in the subcontinent who possessed gunpowder weapons. Bahadur Shah of Gujarat had, by 1535, a number of cannons manned by Ottoman and Portuguese artillerymen and engineers.[5] Thus, while it cannot be denied that firearms played an important role in Babur's victories, we can no longer rely exclusively on gunpowder to explain the establishment of his empire in Hindustan.

In light of these challenges, the explanations for the rise of the Mughal Empire must be revisited and refined. The following analysis will argue in four parts that Babur's ability to control language and symbols gave him a unique advantage over his adversaries, allowing him not simply to win battles but also to hold on to his conquests. To make the case for this thesis, first the exact nature of Babur's Timurid heritage will be reconstructed and related to his political success (as opposed to being vaguely assumed). The most important aspect of this legacy was not genealogy, but a sophisticated tradition of visual and verbal presentation of royal images based on historical models – a kind of 'propaganda', so to speak. Second, the reasons for the suppression of Timur's memory will be examined. The world-conqueror's legacy was not a matter of inconsequence, but an embarrassing liability for Babur. Third, it will be shown how, in order to cover up his Timurid blemish as well as other political stigma, Babur opted for aligning himself with the memory of the Ottomans, Ghaznavids and others. This act was a stroke of genius. Babur had to re-package himself to gain the support of the Muslim elite of South Asia – but how was this 're-packaging' received? To propose some answers, the fourth part of this chapter will evaluate the problems of communication and reception in Hindustan.

The Timurid legacy

Let us first turn our attention to Babur's fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Central Asian heritage. Three elements of Babur's Timurid cultural legacy contributed fundamentally to his particular success later on in India. These were: the use of visual and literary arts in 'propaganda', the presentation of Timurid kings through a stock set of images derived from well-known portraits of the protagonists of Persian heroic literature, and an increasing sense of sophistication and self-consciousness – especially in later Timurid art.

Timur himself had actively set out to control his image as it appeared in books and in paintings. The Syrian historian Ibn 'Arabshah, who wrote a scathing report of the world-conqueror's cruelties, testifies to Timur's appreciation of the value of historical literature as propaganda. Ibn 'Arabshah relates how the illiterate warlord was always accompanied by a troop of storytellers who would narrate the tales of former Persian kings so frequently that Timur could correct them from memory if one of them happened to make a mistake in his recital. Moreover, and this is crucial, the sultan maintained a number of secretaries who would record his actions and then read them back to him so that he might alter or censor them as necessary.[6] Finally, in 1401, Timur had commissioned a preacher residing in Azerbaijan to use the above-mentioned notes and other sources and compose a chronicle of his reign in a simple language accessible to all even the most ordinary readers.[7] Short of dictating the text himself, these literary undertakings are the nearest thing to composing an autobiography by an unlettered man who nevertheless was keenly aware of the importance of exerting control over his public image.

But Timur's alertness to the use of art as propaganda extended beyond the realm of words into the pictorial domain as well. The visual facet of the

world-conqueror's political acumen manifested itself in two ways. On the one hand he offered patronage (by invitation or force) to painters from all over the Islamic world to illustrate manuscripts or paint freestanding images depicting a set number of royal themes (banquets, hunting and war). Art historians see Timur's sponsorship of the arts as his attempt at legitimation by distancing himself from his simple pastoralist and military origins while asserting a new role as the benefactor of urban high culture.[8] However, even more significant is the fact that at some point these painters began to portray Timur himself, publicly, as with the rendering of the warlord's India campaigns on the walls of a pavilion in the capital city of Samarqand.[9] All this should demonstrate how central was the political manipulation of visual and literary arts to the Timurids from their earliest days.

This brings us to the second point. Over the years, the successors of Timur became more and more adept at manipulating the artistic conventions that had been founded during the reign of their illustrious forefather. The death of Timur had set off a process of fragmentation in his domain – his sons and grandsons were gradually reduced to smaller principalities, and were constantly engaged in fighting their cousins and brothers for an unrealizable political dominance. This proved a boon to the art of the period, as there developed a fierce competition among the princes for the patronage of high culture. What is particularly relevant in this period is that a set of pictorial designs was repeated and refined for the portrayal of not only the Timurid potentates, but also well-known epic and historical figures of the Persian literary tradition.[10] For example, one could see an almost exact verisimilitude among the portraits of a legendary monarch on horseback (probably from the Persian epic *The Book of Kings*) attacking a lion, a mounted Timur striking an opponent (in an illustrated chronicle of his reign), and prince Baysunghur slaying a wolf while riding (freestanding ink sketch).[11] Nor would contemporaries miss the perfect resemblance between an image of the Sasanian emperor Khusraw II (from Nizami's romance of *Khusraw and Shirin*) sitting on a throne, holding a wine goblet and attending a kneeling supplicant, and its near replica showing the Timurid prince Baysunghur engaged in the very same manner.[12] The magnitude of this development cannot be overstated, for this phenomenon is nothing but the visualizing of the same act of royal representation as the artistic reincarnation of former heroes that we saw in Timur's historical and literary undertakings. In other words, just as with the historical narratives chronicling their reigns, the visual arts of the age also began depicting Timurid princes in the process of historical imitation. This would certainly lead to a heightened sense of the political significance of role-modeling among these men. It would surely intensify their sense of a 'self' as a historical character. It would force them to see themselves as needing to broadcast their persona based on a set number of older royal models. This could, at least potentially, provide them with a certain facility in changing their role-models in response to fluctuating circumstances.

The third fundamental Timurid legacy of Babur is a mere reinforcement to the points made above. We have seen how Timur and his descendants could manipulate literature and painting for political needs, and how this involved closely modeling Timurid princes upon former historical heroes. Simultaneously, and perhaps connected to it, there developed a strong sense of the 'self' among the artists employed in the workshops of Central Asia and Khurasan. This might be in part related to an increasing number of works, dating to the late fifteenth century, concerned with mundane events from the daily life of relatively ordinary people. The epicenter of this movement was the city of Herat, at the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara (d. 1506), the last great Timurid ruler and cousin of Babur (there, as a young man Babur had spent some time).[13] There exists a painting from circa 1495 showing maidens bathing in a pool while being spied on by a master from behind a window. Another from 1483 depicts a bearded man who has fallen in water.[14] While non-royal themes became more and more prevalent, there also appeared artistic portraits, possibly self-portraits. The painters themselves, and not only their aristocratic patrons, began to be legitimate subject matters of the visual arts. The most famous of these are the handful of artist portraits by the eminent Kamal al-Din Bihzad (d. 1535–36).[15]

Thus, the more essential elements of Babur's Timurid legacy were a tradition of literary and visual 'propaganda', the modeling of the public image of Timurid princes upon stereotyped historical and epic heroes, and a growing sense of 'self', at least among the princes and artists working at the end of the fifteenth century. Babur was a product of this culture. He knew the works of Bihzad, had been exposed to both Timurid historiography and the Persian literary canon with which the authors of the former had been in dialogue, and had even witnessed the paintings depicting Timur in his Indian ventures. It is little surprise then that when he did begin to write his memoirs – or, in other words, when he started to portray himself as a character in a historical narrative – he had little difficulty casting himself as the literary reincarnation of innumerable precursors. Early on, Timur himself had been such a historical model for the young prince. What is fascinating, however, is the process by which Babur suddenly abandoned Timur in favor of more suitable prototypes when he was confronted with new circumstances in Hindustan. Essentially, the memory of Timur became a liability for him, and he had to divest himself from it. The swiftness and flexibility with which Babur accomplished this feat was in no small degree due to the advantage of his more profound Timurid legacy of artistic and political ability.

Babur's association with Timur and others

One must recall the structure of the *Baburnama* to appreciate this shift properly. As stated before, the text comprises three distinct parts: the first third recounts Babur's youthful exploits in Central Asia; the middle third narrates

the events of his life while in Afghanistan as a mature man; and the last third is set in India. Now, any careful reader of the memoirs should notice the sudden near-disappearance of Timur from the last section of the *Babur-nama*. The world-conqueror's name occurs at least twenty-two times in the 'Central Asia' and 'Kabul' parts of the book (roughly two-thirds of all the folios), but only twice in the episodes set in India. Gone are the ever-present familial pride that Babur displays in Fergana and Kabul – the Timurid heartlands. In addition to this, and even more subtle, is the fading away of Timur as a conspicuously imitated role model.

There are indeed passages, particularly in the middle of the book (in Afghanistan), where Babur's behavior clearly echoes the deeds of his ruthless ancestor. It seems that while a king in Kabul, Babur had decided that one aspect of his public persona should be based upon the historical character of Timur. For example, early in 1505, when Babur routed a band of Afghans in the mountains west of the Indus River, the prisoners were brought in and made an example of in a ghastly act of theatrics – 'Those who were brought in alive were ordered beheaded, after which a tower of skulls was erected in the camp'; and again the next day, 'as soon as the army reached [the enemy encampment], they smashed the fortifications and cut off the heads of a hundred or so rebellious Afghans, which they brought back to Hangu. Another tower of skulls was erected.'[16] There is no mistaking whose memory was meant to be evoked by such displays. This was, of course, Timur, whose trademark skull-towers had been depicted in vivid detail in the famous history of his reign, the *Zafarnamah* of Sharaf al-Din Yazdi. We have seen in the previous chapter that Babur had most certainly read this book. That he should have used Timur so much in Fergana and Kabul and suddenly have dropped him in Hindustan leads to a single conclusion: the memory of Timur which had served Babur admirably in Central Asia and Kabul became a liability in India. As Irfan Habib has argued, Timur's vicious assault on the subcontinent had been universally censured by Indian historians of the fifteenth century.[17] Reawakening this legacy would not have endeared Babur to anyone, particularly the local Muslim elite of South Asia. It was indeed to these men that Babur had to direct his powers of persuasion following his military success in the subcontinent, and it was precisely at this point that Babur's true Timurid legacy came to his aid. In a stroke of genius, remarkable not only for its ingenuity but for the swiftness with which it was carried out, Babur decided to present a new image of himself as a ghazi sultan comparable to Mahmud of Ghazna.

However, by assuming his new identity, Babur was also trying to distance himself from another serious taint on his reputation: his connection to the Shiite uprising of the Safavid Shah Isma'il (d. 1524), whose meteoric ascent had completely polarized the Muslim world at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[18] The portions of the memoirs that would deal with the events of Babur's cooperation with the Safavids are lost, but Babur's cousin and protégé Muhammad Haydar Dughlat (1499–1551), who himself wrote

a chronicle detailing the events of the sixteenth century, reports that in October of 1511, with help from Safavid soldiers, Babur had managed to wrest the city of Samarqand from the Uzbeks who were systematically eradicating the Timurid line of princes in Central Asia.[19] What happened after this event is quite significant.

Haydar Dughlat states that while the population of Samarqand was greatly overjoyed at Babur's arrival, even decorating shops and houses as he entered the town, they were none too pleased by their prince's association with the heretical Qizilbash 'red head' Safavids, and expected him quickly to get rid of his borrowed crown which, they believed, 'was fashioned out of all the heresy and lies that a few Shiites had pulled out of a donkey's arse and placed on his head'.[20] Predictably, as Babur hesitated to distance himself from the Safavids, the people of Samarqand withdrew their support from him and turned him out. Whether or not the true sectarian resentment of the Samarqandis can substantiated, it is nevertheless quite relevant that a Sunni Central Asian man in Babur's entourage apparently believed it to have been the case – and probably, so did Babur.

Assuming the masque of the ghazi king

Thus, in order to rectify his damaged reputation, Babur had decided to present himself as a ghazi king. This would recall in the minds of mostly Sunni Indian Muslim elite the memory of the archetypal ghazi sultan, Mahmud of Ghazna, as well as the Ottomans, who had established their predominance as the main Sunni power of the Islamic World after defeating the Safavids in 1514 at Chaldiran[21] – a battle charged terribly with crystallizing sectarian animosities. It is not clear how Babur was able to gauge the prestige of the Ottomans in the subcontinent. Nevertheless, there were indeed people in India, specifically in Gujarat, who by about 1486 knew the Ottomans as the primary ghazi sultans of the western domains of the abode of Islam, and had tried to elevate their own standing by posing as comrade ghazis fighting irreligion in the east. The evidence for this fact comes from the work of 'Abd al-Husayn b. Haji Tuni, the probable author of a court history composed for the Gujarati Sultan Mahmud Begarha (r. 1458–1511).[22] Here, the author made much of the etymological connection between the name of his patron Mahmud and not only Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna but also the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, 'protector of ghazis', and concluded 'while Sultan Mahmud Begarha has purged the land of India from the filth of polytheism with his luminous Yemenese blade, Sultan Mehmed of Rūm, following divine approval, has daubed the Egyptian sword in the blood of Franks'.[23] Thus, a few years before Babur's last invasion of India, a local South Asian monarch (or his bureaucrats) had experimented with the public image of the ghazi king, connecting his endeavors to Mahmud of Ghazna on the one hand and the Ottomans on the other. Perhaps Babur had heard something of this from the Samarqandi

merchants, who, according to 'Abd al-Husayn, would go to Gujarat yearly for trade.[24]

Whatever the case may be, Babur's method of self-presentation as the great ghazi king falls into one of three categories. First, in key passages of the text, Babur would make references to Ottoman or Ghaznavid historical writing, with or without acknowledgement. Second, he would base an entire portion of his book on the actions of his models. The formulaic quality of Mahmud's ghazas, for instance, would prove to be an immense boon to Babur, for, if his royal image depended on the easy recognizability of the model upon which it was based, then what better exemplar to imitate than one whose actions were already stereotyped and repetitious? It would assure the immediate identification of the Timurid prince with Mahmud of Ghazna, with whose formulaic adventures Indian Muslim audiences would presumably already be very intimate. In any event, both these points were argued in greater detail in the previous chapter.

Finally, Babur would abstract a narrative pattern, almost teleological, from Ghaznavid and other historical texts that would produce in the mind of his audience an anticipated finale guaranteeing victory for the Timurid prince. To put the last scheme more concretely, following a pattern unmistakably present in Ghaznavid, Ottoman and other histories, Babur depicted his career as one of gradual escalation from a stage of 'rough frontier raiding' to the establishment of a 'law-and-order' Islamic polity. As most of these textual strategies occur in the Indian (unrevised) parts of the memoirs, there is a very high probability that Babur was in fact carrying out on the plains of India something very similar to what he was writing. In other words, there must have been a very intimate connection between his words and the reality depicted therein, not as mere reflection but the reverse – as script.

From the eleventh century onwards, one can detect a general pattern in many Perso-Islamic histories whereby the rise of a given state or dynasty is divided into three stages – a kind of organic cycle. This pattern was later theorized upon by the North African scholar Ibn Khaldun. The stages run as follows: in the early phase of the dynasty, comparable to youth, a group of wandering warriors band together and defeat a corrupt king. The children of these men begin the next stage, the middle age, whereby the conquerors set off a program of centralization and imperial ordering. Finally, in decay, later descendants merely succumb to debauchery and the corrupting influences of civilization, and lose their kingdom to a new set of roving and austere conquerors. This pattern was already present in Ghaznavid historiography of the late eleventh century. The founders of the dynasty, the slave soldiers Sebüktegin and Alptegin, were remembered as commanders in the frontier region of Afghanistan, living an austere life, earning their keep by raiding infidels, and enforcing justice. Next came Mahmud of Ghazna who, although a ghazi, also ruled a brilliant court, supported religious establishment and presided ably over a society based on law, order and prosperity. Last came Mas'ud, personally brave, but inept as a ruler, corrupted by luxury and

failing in the administration of justice. Mas'ud in turn was unseated by the nomadic Seljuk Turks, who resembled his more sober and simple grandfather Sebüktegin.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the early stages of this cyclical pattern were already operative in Ottoman historiography. The empire was portrayed as moving from a frontier state run by heterodox raiders to a centralized Islamic empire housed in Constantinople.[25] Further east in Iran, the second Safavid monarch Shah Tahmasp (d. 1576) had, by the middle of the sixteenth century, begun to move away from the primitive phase of his dynasty, marked by his father's messianism, ghaza and wine drinking, to a more reputable stage marked by sobriety, order, security and justice. His 'Edict of Sincere Repentance', prohibiting the use of alcohol, among other things, served as the watershed that marked this transition.[26] Closer to home still, we are told by later Afghan historians that the very Lodi dynasty that Babur overthrew followed the same pattern. The founder of the Lodi rule, Sultan Bahlul, was described as a king who was:

> [C]apable, harmless, kind, merciful, and protective of the masses. Whatever came to his hand, be it property, goods, and new *parganahs* (administrative units), he would distribute among his soldiers. He kept nothing for himself and would not hoard a treasury. He was a simple and unceremonious king. At mealtimes he would send off the gatekeepers from his court, and whoever came over would eat alongside him. He would not sit on a throne and would prevent the commanders from standing up ... He would treat all his commanders and army men in a brotherly fashion.[27]

This humble and simple ghazi was then succeeded by his son, Sikandar Lodi, who began a new chapter in Lodi history marked by magnificence, justice, prosperity and orthodoxy. Significantly, in the Indian context, this evolution did not include a shift away from ghaza:

> Prince Nizam ascended the throne at the age of eighteen with the title 'Sikandar Ghazi'. Sultan Sikandar was a magnificent king (*'azīm al-sha'n*) and possessed self-control. He was very generous, glorious (*bā 'izzat*), and courteous, and was endowed with gravitas ... He was perfectly brave and just ... Portions of the night he would spend in managing the kingdom and writing orders to the commanders of the frontiers and letters to contemporary kings. Seventeen individuals from among the chosen ulema and virtuous men were present in the private zone ... During the government of Sultan Sikandar agriculture flourished. Merchants engaged in taxable trades, subjects both high and low, as well all other folks lived in peace and comfort ... There was no trace of theft or banditry in any of the lands that belonged to him ... Whoever from amongst the caffres had become subservient to Islam he would place in

> his own kingdom. Whoever was rebellious or an apostate, he would count him among those who bore an evil intent to the kingdom and would either kill or exile them.[28]

The exact same movement from humble soldier to grandiose sultan is what the second and third parts of the *Baburnama* are structured to chart in the career of the Timurid protagonist as well. In his case, it was a progress from the former raider king of the Afghan frontier to the new *pādishāh-i ghāzī* of a north Indian empire. Having read Ghaznavid (and possibly something of Ottoman) histories, Babur then proceeded to recast his entire life as a movement from phase one to two of great empires – from Sebüktegin to Mahmud, as it were.

The way this evolution operates in the *Baburnama* is as follows: Babur transitioned out of his childhood in Central Asia to early manhood in Afghanistan. Then began a new phase of his life, marked by primitive poverty, raiding, rough frontier justice, and camaraderie among his band. In all these he resembled the early Ghaznavid rulers Alptegin and Sebüktegin.[29] However, keeping in line with his sixteenth-century counterparts in Iran and Anatolia, this early phase for Babur is also distinguished by some impropriety – in his case, drinking. Then, at the end of the 'Afghanistan' section and the beginning of the 'India' section, Babur repented of his bad ways while crossing a river into India; he later took a vow of abstinence, won his ghaza and became the king of a new polity. In effect, he made the transition from Sebüktegin to Mahmud.

Let us begin with the episode describing Babur's move from Fergana to Afghanistan. It marks not only a political beginning but also a passage from youth to manhood. Moreover it sets the tone for the entirety of Part Two, characterized by poverty, raiding, and camaraderie:

> I rode out of Fergana for Khurasan [today's Afghanistan] in search of a quest wherever the opportunity might present itself. In the month of Muharram (June–July 1504), I left Fergana for Khurasan. Here, at the beginning of my twenty-third year, I first put a razor to my face. Great and small alike were rushing to join me with great expectations. There must have been between two to three hundred men, mostly on foot, with clubs in their hands, rough boots on their feet, and shepherd's cloaks on their backs. Hardship had reached such proportions that among all of us there were only two tents.[30]

It is difficult to miss the exuberance of these lines, marking a new stage in the prince's life, as the young man sets out for an adventure or quest. But the date also indicates a transition from adolescence to manhood, whereby the twenty-three-old prince starts to shave for the first time. All the while, an integral quality of the migration is primitive poverty. He is joined by a band of ill-shod men dressed in animal skins and carrying clubs. They are

extremely poor, as they have only two tents among them. As he writes later, however, Babur himself does not sleep in them, showing his camaraderie with his soldiers.

Now, although Babur managed to win the kingdom of Kabul for himself, he earned his living primarily by raids. This is a fundamental feature of the 'frontier' stage, of course. 'We made constant raids on our way to the Indus'; 'we made a raid at Jangalak at the mouth of the Khush Valley and defeated a few Hazaras'; 'twice I participated in raids ... bringing in a lot of sheep and horses'; 'we rode out of Kabul intending to raid the Ghilzai'; 'proceeding along the road about a league more we could see the amassed Afghans, and the raid was on'.[31]

Another feature of the early phase, rough frontier justice, is also present here. 'Finally I had one of Sayyid Ali Darban's warriors clubbed at the gate for having stolen a pot of oil. He died under the blows. The people [meaning the soldiers, of course] were cowed by this punishment'; 'I had one of [our] soldiers hacked to pieces for bothering some of the residents there.'[32] These stories bear the most striking resemblance to the accounts of Alptegin and Sebüktegin cleaving a soldier of theirs in half for stealing a chicken from the inhabitants of their new domains (more on this in Chapter 4). The point, of course, is that by setting an example, the general in charge would prevent rapine among his soldiers and gain the confidence of the destitute and defenseless local population of his new frontier principality.

Yet, in spite of the severe discipline placed upon the soldiers, Babur takes part in all their hardships. This is also a hallmark of Sebüktegin's reign; he, in a time of scarcity during a battle, shares his food with his men and even serves them all out of a pot with a ladle before scooping the bottom for himself (see Chapter 4). Babur's sense of camaraderie comes through unmistakably in the following lines, describing a fierce snowstorm during a march:

> The cave seemed to be rather small. I took a shovel and cleared away enough snow at the mouth of the cave to make myself a place to sit. I dug down chest deep, and still I did not reach the ground, but it was a bit of shelter from the wind. There I sat down. Several people asked me to come inside, but I refused. I figured that to leave my people out in the snow and the storm, with me comfortable in a warm place, or to abandon all the people in hardship and misery, with me here asleep without a care, was neither manly nor comradely.[33]

This is precisely the kind of group solidarity that characterizes the primitive stage of dynasties in the cycle of rise, climax and decline.

Finally, in addition to displaying a sense of camaraderie with his soldiers, enforcing strict frontier discipline, raiding and suffering material poverty, there occurs a fifth theme in the Afghanistan parts of the *Baburnama* – excessive drinking. This feature is absent in Ghaznavid texts but is at least hinted

at in the Safavid ones, and is represented by a broader heterodoxy among the Ottomans. Perhaps the theme of drunkenness, so prevalent in the middle of the text, and equally crucial for the repentance that marks the birth of a new Babur, was used to help make the transitional evolution of the prince more emphatic. After all, in Ghaznavid, Ottoman, Lodi or Safavid histories, the stages of rise and climax are usually not accomplished by one individual; rather, a father of lowly lineage embodies the first, and a more auspicious son occupies the second. Babur was skipping a step. He wanted to be both a Sebüktegin and a Mahmud, both a Murad Ghazi and Mehmed the Conqueror, both Isma'il and Tahmasp, both Bahlul and Sikandar Lodi.[34] The theme of drunkenness, repentance and sobriety helped accomplish this evolution as a kind of conversion – i.e., as a birth, death and rebirth.

A look at the drinking scenes in the *Baburnama* supports this assertion. All such episodes occur only at the very end of the 'Afghanistan' section. They take place in quick, relentless succession, and seem to be placed there only to prepare the reader for the scene of repentance that occurs at the very beginning of the 'India' section. Moreover, almost every time Babur had mentioned alcohol previous to this point, he had done so in order to censure the drinker. Modern scholarship does not dwell on this fact much,[35] but no careful reader of the memoirs should miss the point that, by the logic of the text itself, there is an element of sinfulness in Babur's carousing. Let us consider first the following examples of festive scenes in the early parts of the book:

> Sultan Husayn Mirza was abstinent for six or seven years when he first came to the throne, but he later took to drink. His sons and all his military men were addicted to drink and lived with inordinate revelry and debauchery.

and

> When a city like Herat fell to his possession, he did nothing night and day but revel and carouse. He abandoned the toil and trouble of conquest and military leadership. Consequently, as time passed, his retainers and realm dwindled instead of increasing.[36]

It is against the horizon of these remarks that, when confronted with the revelries at the end of the 'Afghanistan section', the reader can at least suspect an implicit sense of transgression: 'We mounted for an excursion, got on a boat, and drank spirits' (227a); 'In a little while they got him roaring drunk. No matter how we tried to get the party under control nothing worked' (227b–228); 'We drank on the boat until late that night, left the boat roaring drunk, and got on our horses. I didn't remember a thing, except that when I got to my tent I vomited a lot' (228b); 'At dawn the next day we got on a boat and had a morning draught. Late that afternoon we went to the garden of violets where we drank' (233b); 'At midday there was a wine party. At dawn the next day we had a morning draught' (235b); 'I too went to this party and drank. We left there late that night, and there was more drinking in the large white tent' (237a); 'Late that afternoon we went up on the roof of the pigeon house to drink' (237b); 'At midday there was a wine party under a plane tree' (240a); 'On Wednesday the 27th I finally [cut my hair]. There was a wine party that day' (241b); 'That evening there was wine party at Khwaja Muhammad Ali's tent' (244b) [slightly abridged].

Whatever Babur's intentions might have been in packing the last seventeen leaves of his memoirs before India with this overabundance of debauchery, the effect is to highlight the transition to the next stage of his life in India, set off by a vow of repentance.

Babur's moment of moral redemption began during his final entry into the subcontinent, as he crossed the border to India for the last time. Furthermore, the crossing marks the transition not only from the 'Afghanistan' to the 'Hindustan' section, but also from the frontier raiding phase of his life to that of conquest and imperial establishment. The act of redemption, which occurs on a river on the borders of India, is of immense symbolic importance. The river serves as a liminal space between two kingdoms, between the old world and the new, in which a new Babur is born. The scene runs as follows: Babur set out from Kabul with his soldiers. The plan, as he stated it, was to march along the Kabul River down to the Khyber Pass and then enter the plains of Hindustan. Babur and his inner circle would float down the river in a raft, drinking, taking drugs and enjoying themselves withal, while the soldiers would trek along the road.[37] The path can be traced using some of the place names he mentions, where he camped; they are all in today's Nangarhar province in southeastern Afghanistan.[38]

Now, on one occasion, the inebriated men in Babur's company started to quote poetry. Babur in turn composed on the spot a line of obscene verse: 'What am I to do with a dope like you? What am I to do with every female ass with a hole as big as a cow's?' A day or two later Babur was visited with a violent fever and coughed up blood. He interpreted his illness as a sign of chastisement from God, and repented, quoting the *Quran*:

> 'O Lord, we have dealt unjustly with our own souls; and if you do not forgive us, and are not merciful to us, we shall surely perish'. Once again I sought forgiveness and apologized anew. I freed my mind from and broke my pen to these sorts of vain thoughts and improper activities.[39]

Thus, Babur's repentance began with a mental cleansing as he crossed into the subcontinent for the last time. It was indeed a few pages later, as he came face to face with his archenemy Rana Sanga in the battle that made

him a ghazi and gave him full control of northern India, that Babur took his public vow of temperance and ordered drinking vessels to be destroyed, comparing this act to idol-breaking. The subsequent victory had him established as the ruler of a new empire, the so-called empire of the great Mughals.

To recapitulate, Babur's relationship with Ghaznavid and Ottoman histories went far beyond brief verbal echoes, and extended not only to the modeling of specific episodes after his heroic and literary prototypes, but also to the structuring of his entire career on a trajectory that would evoke in the minds of his readers an anticipation of success, an expectation of 'state evolution' from a humble frontier phase to a grandiose imperial one. The true value of Babur's Timurid heritage lies precisely here. The experiments of the princes of Central Asia had created particular cultural tools that an exceptionally gifted individual could utilize in order to suppress the problematic aspects of that very culture. What remains to be seen is whether or not Babur succeeded in communicating his message to an Indian audience.

The problem of communication and reception

What Babur had gained through military success, he managed to hold on to and govern by manipulating signs and symbols that were meaningful to people in his new territories. In this last and final section, it will be argued that Babur was aware that communicating to his new subjects was crucial, that he sought to address this problem by conducting a sustained literary campaign in Persian, and that there is evidence from contemporary and later authors that Babur's effort was not ineffective.

From early on, Babur had realized that victory alone was not sufficient for controlling his new possessions. He had also recognized that he suffered from a problem of communication. He admits that, after the Battle of Panipat, people in Delhi and Agra were fleeing and leaving nothing behind.[40] The few records remaining from the defeated Afghans confirm Babur's description of this hectic post-conquest period. Nearly a decade after Panipat, an Afghan soldier by the name of Datu Sarvani wrote down his memoirs for the son of his spiritual mentor, Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi, in order to help him compose a hagiography about his venerable father's life. Part of Datu's remembrance runs as follows:

> When His Majesty Babur Padishah killed Sultan Ibrahim and took the province of Delhi, tribes of people and of all the Afghans set off to the east. A multitude gathered at a particular crossing on the banks of the river Saru; there were few boats and the Afghans were running in every direction, procuring them. From behind, the news came that the Mughals were coming, and alarm was manifest.[41]

Babur had to take control of this general panic, but he had also become aware of the language barrier between his soldiers and the population of Hindustan. He writes:

> [Our soldiers] had traveled for two or three months from their homeland, and had to deal with an unfamiliar people whose language we did not know and who did not know ours. [Verse]: *A group confused, peace of mind shattered; a people preoccupied, a very strange people.*[42]

'Our language' is, of course, Turkic, whereas the defeated population no doubt spoke various north Indian vernaculars as well as possibly Pashto. It is, however, interesting that the verse at the end of Babur's Turkic passage should be in Persian, portending the means to overcome this communication breakdown. It is at this point in the memoirs that we begin to get Persian letters, composed by Babur's boon companion and associate Shaykh Zayn Khvafi, inserted into the *Baburnama*. Babur also states that, after the Battle of Panipat, he sent Shaykh Zayn to Delhi in order to read the Friday sermon to the people there in Babur's name.[43] This sermon would presumably have been in Persian.

A couple of features regarding Shaykh Zayn's letters in the *Baburnama* are pertinent. First, they primarily address specific concerns of the population in South Asia (as opposed to possible readers in Iran or Central Asia). Second, the texts presuppose a familiarity on the part of the audience with several of these letters, most of which are not reproduced in Babur's memoirs. The Persian victory proclamations and other letters indeed form part of a sustained epistolary campaign conducted by the Mughals in Hindustan.

To illustrate, Babur's famous vow of temperance also accompanied lucrative tax exemptions extended to the Muslims of his new domains. He says:

> During my repentance, [Darvish] Muhammad Sarban and Shaykh Zayn reminded me of my promise to repeal *tamgha* [a Mongol tax considered un-Islamic]. 'It is good that you reminded me,' I said. 'The Muslims in the provinces we hold are hereby exempted from the tamgha.' I summoned the scribes and ordered them to write decrees informing of these two momentous events that had happened [repealing the tax and Babur's vow of temperance with regards to alcohol]. The decree, of Shaykh Zayn's composition, was copied and dispatched to the entire realm.[44]

This passage is relevant not only for its confirmation of Babur's emphasis on his transition from Mongol to Islamic rule, but also for the fact that it further supports the claim that his vow of temperance was meant as a symbolic act directed towards not just his soldiers but also, specifically, the Muslims of the subcontinent, who were moreover placated by monetary incentives. In all this, communications in the shape of Persian letters (really news briefs of that era) play a central role.

Nor was this literary undertaking an isolated act, since Shaykh Zayn's other letters suggest a persistent effort on the part of the Mughals to reach their subjects. For instance, the victory proclamation after the Battle of Khanua begins thus, 'When the glint of the swords of our army, the refuge of Islam, lighted the kingdoms of India with flashes of the luminescence of conquest and victory, *as it has been reported in previous victory-proclamations*' [italics added].[45] Shaykh Zayn's introduction leaves no doubt that Babur had dispatched multiple Persian texts throughout the region, and these formed a continuous narrative although they were not bound together in a single volume.

The book form had been reserved for Babur's own memoirs, not in the original Turkic, which presumably few in India would be able to follow, but through the Persian translation undertaken by Shaykh Zayn in the late 1520s. Shaykh Zayn's version of the memoirs was entitled *Tabaqat-i Baburi*, making an unequivocal allusion to Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* – one of Babur's major sources for his information regarding the past of the subcontinent. It should come as no surprise that Shaykh Zayn's text began not in Fergana in the 1490s (as had the *Baburnama*) but in India, beginning with the fifth and last incursion of his master into Hindustan. To sum up, Babur and his associate had embarked on a systematic information campaign while in India, reading out sermons, distributing proclamations and translating the prince's memoirs, all in Persian, and they had done this in order to gain the confidence of the terrified or insubordinate Muslim elite of South Asia. Again, all this demands that we make allowance for the role of language and communication in the establishment of Mughal rule in the subcontinent.

But did all this effort really pay off? The evidence of the reception of Babur's literary campaign in India falls into three categories: direct quotation by later authors; selective memory of later authors; and the convergence of Babur's language with contemporary authors. A good example of the first category occurs in the writings of Khvurshah b. Qubad al-Husayni, who in the 1560s composed a universal history for his Nizam Shahi and Qutb Shahi patrons in the Deccans. Those portions of the text dealing with the reign of Babur, edited and published as *Tarikh-i Qutbi*, show that the author drew heavily on Shaykh Zayn's *Tabaqat* for the reconstruction of the events of the 1520s and 1530s. For instance, he opened the relevant section in these words: 'Shaykh Zayn has written the following about the nature of the events and conquests of the sublime Padshah [Babur] in India'.[46] A few pages later, Khvurshah cited his source again: 'These affairs are described in detail in Shaykh Zayn's *Vaqi'at*';[47] and again, 'the narrator who accompanied [Babur] in that war has reported'.[48] Regarding the Battle of Khanua, Khurshah states 'It is written in the *Vaqi'at* of Shaykh Zayn',[49] suggesting that the original text of Shaykh Zayn was a more complete narrative than the currently available version translated into English by Hasan Askari. In sum, at least one South Asian author had read Babur's memoirs in Persian translation and freely quoted it.

However, in addition to direct quotation, the evidence of 'selective memory' also substantiates the claim that Babur had led a fairly successful information campaign in the subcontinent. The basis for this assertion is the memoirs of Babur's own daughter, Gulbadan, who composed, perhaps circa 1587,[50] her recollections of the reigns of her father as well as her brother Humayun. The manuscript of this text contains eighty-two folios, and the account of Babur's reign right up to his death (coinciding with the *Baburnama*) covers the first twelve folios. Now, Gulbadan maintains that she was familiar with her father's autobiography and thus had plenty of material to draw upon. This she did, and interwove the narrative with some of her own personal remembrances. It is certainly worth noting how many of the episodes considered important and symbolic in the present analysis are also mentioned by Gulbadan.

Gulbadan begins her texts by stating, 'Following the king's [Akbar] command, I will write down whatever I had heard and remembered'.[51] Interestingly, she does not say what she had 'read'. Even when she refers to the *Baburnama*, she writes, 'The first part of this section will be written from the memoirs of my daddy, his majesty the king',[52] again without categorically stating that she was reading it as opposed to recalling it from memory. Could she even read Turkic?

Moving along, she quickly skims over the Fergana section (seventeen lines in Beveridge's edition), and then proceeds to write about Babur's relocation to Afghanistan, taking a line almost verbatim from the *Baburnama* including a Turkic phrase [in my italics]: 'With two hundred footmen with shepherd's cloaks on their backs, rough boots on their feet, and *clubs in their hands*'.[53] So the first liminal stage of entering the rough frontier life is highlighted and even partially quoted in Turkic, although not in the same order as in the *Baburnama*. If she had the text before her, why did her words diverge from those of her father? She also refers to this phase of her father's life as the 'raiding years' (*dawrān-i qazzāqīhā*), interestingly not using the more common word that Babur had employed in his own text in order to describe his raiding (*chapqun* and not *qazzaqlıq*). Again why the difference?

Next, Gulbadan recounts the political events of Khurasan, including Babur's meeting with his cousins in Herat (forty-two lines, covering folios 3b–5a). She included the significant march in snow (but not Babur's sleeping outside the cave),[54] and then more random events, such as the brief conquest of Samarqand with the help of the Safavids, as well as the birth of Babur's children (her siblings and herself) (forty-eight lines). Next she mentions Babur's incursions into Hindustan, and subsequently returns to the events in Kabul, Badakhshan and Qandahar (thirty lines, covering folios 7b–8b). She then starts relating the final and decisive invasion of India, beginning it not with the incident of Babur composing obscene poetry on the raft, but by marking the liminality of this stage using dates – only the second exact date in the entire narrative up to that point (the first being Humayun's birthday). She wrote, 'On Friday, the middle of Safar 932, when the sun was in the house of the

Sagittarius ...'.[55] There was obviously something significant about that last trip that merited her use of exact chronology.

She next proceeds to the Battle of Panipat and the victory over Ibrahim Lodi, describing it as 'succor from God',[56] since Babur's troops had been massively outnumbered. Detail description of the looted treasures follows, often from the perspective of the family receiving them as gifts in Kabul. More personal memories are incorporated next, before the episode of the Battle of Khanua versus Rana Sanga. This section certainly includes the famous vow of abstinence (and penitence), and the forgiveness of taxes (though she adds other taxes not mentioned by Babur). She narrates Babur's pre-battle Khanua speech, but, strikingly, the content bears little resemblance to the text of the *Baburnama*, focusing primarily on the distance of the Mughal soldiers from their homes. She does not quote the verse from the *Shahnamah* on preserving one's good name for eternity, but does include the phrase 'those who kill will be ghazis and those who die martyrs', while translating it differently still from the other Persian versions of the phrase, again suggesting that there was no single Persian adage corresponding to it: '*agar ghanīm rā mīkushīm ghāzī mīshavīm, va agar kushta mīshavīm shahīd mīshavīm*'.[57]

What does all this mean? First it is worthwhile to note the number of convergences between Gulbadan's memoirs and those episodes of the *Baburnama* highlighted in the present analysis. That Gulbadan decided to include most of these episodes in her brief narrative further underscores the symbolic importance of these passages, and gives more support to the claim that they had a 'propagandistic' purpose. In other words, they were the very episode that must have been constantly talked about and emphasized by Babur and his associates, so that when her daughter began to recall them fifty years later she managed to incorporate most of them in her own version of the events, ignoring the greater portion of the *Baburnama*. Second, based on the notable inconsistencies of detail between Gulbadan's composition and her source, one can propose that there exists the likelihood that Gulbadan did not actually have her father's book before her (assuming that she could read Turkic) and was rewriting the information entirely from memory. This second possibility would also suggest that what she had included (and remembered) were only those parts that had served the purposes of political manipulation by the early Mughals. In short, Khvurshah's direct quotations, as well as Gulbadan's selective memory, suggest that Babur had led a sustained information campaign in the subcontinent.

There is still a third category of evidence for the reception of Babur's literary activity in India: the convergence of Babur's language with contemporary authors. Two such authors are particularly noteworthy. One was the poet and mystic of the Suhravardi order, Hamid b. Fazl Allah Jamali (1483–1542), and the second was the Chishti mystic, Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537), already alluded to above. As for Jamali, he had enjoyed a strong reputation under Sultan Sikandar Lodi, father of Sultan

Ibrahim Lodi who was defeated by Babur in Panipat. The poet had also traveled all over the Islamic world, visiting the cultural heartlands of the Timurids, such as Herat, and meeting such prominent men of letters as the famous poet Jami (d. 1519).

Things took a turn for the worst for Jamali after Sultan Sikandar's death in 1517. He wrote in one of his prose compositions

> after [Sultan Sikander's] death, his friends fell into a terrible disarray, and the chain that held them together completely shattered. Dreadful ill-tempered fools began to show up in Sultan Ibrahim's cabinet [*dīvān*]. A few Afghans who were especially demonic and were experts at raising hell became privy to Sultan Ibrahim's secrets both in public and private.[58]

Some of the new ministers accused Jamali of having insulted Sultan Ibrahim, and the new sultan began to disfavor him.

It was perhaps little wonder that, after the Battle of Panipat, Shaykh Jamali switched sides and began composing odes in honor of Babur. He celebrated the new emperor's victory over the Lodis in these terms:

> The Afghans began to shriek when your sword mowed down their bodies and harvested their souls. When your arrow struck the gigantic elephant, the beast sank in dirt and blood, helpless like a donkey stuck in mud. As soon as the phrase 'In the Name of God' exited your lips on the battlefield, your dagger slaughtered your foes as in sacrifice.[59]

As M. A. Qadiri has stated, what is especially germane, however, is that Jamali's subsequent poems, apparently for the first time, begin to echo the vocabulary and imagery of Babur's gardening activity in Delhi and Agra. We now come across terms such as *chahār bāgh* (four gardens), *hasht khuld* (Eight Paradises), *jūybār* (running stream), etc.[60] In other words, not only had Babur managed to attract through victory the local Indian elite; significantly, he was also infiltrating the language of these men, even in an arena as mundane as praise poetry.

A better example of this linguistic convergence is provided in the life and works of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi. According to the biography of the shaykh written by his son, 'Abd al-Quddus had been present in Sultan Ibrahim's camp during the Battle of Panipat, and after the death of the Lodi Sultan the venerable old man was captured by a soldier of Babur's who, using the shaykh's turban, tied him, his son and a servant to the tail of a horse, and took the company to Babur in Delhi, forcing them to walk for forty miles.[61] However, the surviving specimens of the shaykh's letter suggest that he managed to gain his freedom in Delhi and, while maintaining his ties to Afghan soldiers, he simultaneously began to curry for influence among the Mughals.[62] Of particular relevance here is the undated letter

of 'Abd al-Quddus to Babur himself. It is not certain whether or not the letter was sent at all (and, even if it was, whether Babur had actually read it), before or after the Battle of Khanua. Nevertheless, there exist a number of striking parallels between this text and the *Baburnama*. For instance, 'Abd al-Quddus calls himself a dervish and praises Babur for respecting the ulema and the Sufis and for having made provision for them.[63] The shaykh asks Babur to cut the abominable tax on their lands, demanding of him justice, care of the ulema, control of the army, and enforcement of Islamic law particularly in such a way that would discriminate against non-Muslims and subdue them strictly.[64]

Were Babur's ghazi rhetoric, his vow of repentance and his tax exemptions a *response* to the kind of viewpoints that Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus represented? Or was it the other way around – namely, the shaykh was appropriating the new rhetoric of Babur and incorporating it into his own writings and viewpoints? After all, the letter suggests that Babur had already made provisions for the poor, and 'Abd al-Quddus' request for tax cuts (different from the Mongol taxes forgiven by Babur) might be further petitions encouraged by Babur's earlier removal of financial obligations.

The shaykh's pointed antipathy towards non-Muslims also seems to suggest the letter to Babur was formulated after and not before Khanua. It is certainly true, as Simon Digby has stated, that, like many other Indian Muslim religious worthies of those days, 'Abd al-Quddus held contradictory views ranging from sympathy to intolerance towards non-Muslims.[65] But, at least according to Digby's study of the shaykh's biography, the most vehement of these views are expressed not in older letters to Sikandar Lodi or later ones to Humayun, but only in the letter to Babur, suggesting a positive reaction to and an alignment with Babur's language on the shaykh's part. Finally, it is also worthwhile to consider once again the memoirs of Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus' spiritual disciple, the Afghan soldier Datu Sarvani. Datu reports that in 1528 – i.e., a year after the Battle of Khanua – he had a dream in which the shaykh appeared to him and warned him to avoid the company of a Hindu ascetic whom Datu had recently met and from whom had he sought spiritual guidance, because 'he is a heretic and is not near to God'.[66] The fact that Datu had this dream in 1528 is suggestive. Very likely, 'Abd al-Quddus held no such positions or did not express them previously, otherwise his disciple would have eschewed the company of the non-Muslim guide altogether. Rather, it is more plausible that Datu's dream coincides with his shaykh's newly hardened stance against non-Muslim mystics (expressed in his letters or perhaps through rumors), and when this is placed in the historical context, one might infer that 'Abd al-Quddus was responding to and appropriating Babur's new religious rhetoric. Babur's dominance is manifesting itself in the language of his subject. In sum, whether through direct quotations (in the case of Khvurshah b. Qubad), selective memory (in Gulbadan's case) or convergence of rhetoric between Babur on the one hand and Indian Muslim elite (such as Jamali or

'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi) on the other, what is for certain is that Babur's literary campaign, his manipulation of signs and symbols, was indeed intended for his new subjects, and our meager evidence suggests that it was not without effect.

Babur had inherited a century of perfected verbal and visual propaganda. Timurid rulers had developed a strong sense of self which could be represented to others, based on historical models, for specific political goals. Combining this heritage with his tumultuous personal experience, and perhaps a unique individual gift, Babur was able to understand and manipulate symbols, be they words or images, with a great degree of flexibility and swiftness. He was able to abstract from a set of key histories of India enough information in order to appropriate and manipulate the cultural expectations of his new subjects against them. If, as modern scholars now agree, gunpowder did not indeed play as central a role in Babur's conquests as was once thought, then the reasons for the success of the Timurid prince and his small band of soldiers must be supplemented. Babur controlled India because he exerted a great effort to manipulate information, because he also won the battle of signs, symbols and language. He virtually marginalized his opponents. In this, he was little different from his exact contemporary, Hernan Cortés, the conqueror of the New Indies.[67]

Now that the identity of Babur's main role-models has been established, their main function identified and the nature of their influence on Babur's words and deeds elucidated to some point, the analysis will next turn to the ghazas of Mahmud of Ghazna and Murad II. Indeed, those two ghazi kings had much in common with their Timurid counterpart, for, as with Babur, both Mahmud and Murad II seem to have played an instrumental role in inventing their own public image, and they did this (again like Babur) by reading the histories of former heroes and inscribing their own deeds as the re-enactment of literary role models. Their legacy continued to be influential because, in effect, they took as many pains in creating it as did Babur.

3 The origins of the ghazi king

Perhaps no other monarch in Perso-Islamic historiography embodies the role of the 'ghazi king' as incontrovertibly as Mahmud of Ghazna. Mahmud's legacy became almost legendary, and this was no coincidence; a great deal of care and effort went into crafting the image of the Ghaznavid ruler. The fact that one of the earliest surviving dynastic histories in Islamic historiography as well as the foundational courtly panegyrics in Persian were written during his reign is highly relevant. The present chapter will analyze Mahmud's personification of the image of ghazi king as an amalgam of numerous textual prototypes – indeed, as a web of countless literary threads. But in addition to this, evidence will be sought to test the hypothesis that Mahmud was himself involved in this image-making, and that he might have in fact acted them out publicly. In other words, Chapter 3 will also try to challenge the artificial boundary between text and *hors-texte*.

More specifically, following a brief historical narrative, it will be argued that the accounts of Mahmud's ghazas in India revive the conquest narratives of the early Islamic period. In contrast to his immediate predecessors, the Ghaznavid's encounters with non-Muslims were portrayed not as defensive jihads in face of an urgent threat to Islam, but as aggressive and unprovoked assaults led by the formidable ghazi king. The reports of these battles, although present in a variety of contemporary sources, followed a roughly standardized formula. In effect, they were based on a uniform literary blueprint. Interestingly, independent historiographical traditions tell us that the ghaza narratives all derived from the victory proclamations sent from India. With that insight, one can scan the Ghaznavid sources and find evidence of Mahmud's direct involvement in preparing royal correspondence. Reading around the context, one can then discover the sources for the ghaza narratives. Mahmud and his secretaries were combining the histories of at least three major heroes, kings and prophets, from contemporary Islamic tradition; Moses, Alexander, and the legendary king of the ancient Iranian tradition, Faridun. There is enough material in the sources to allow us to infer how Mahmud had been exposed to such tales and, significantly, how he had tried to model his actions on them. Finally, the findings of this chapter will

be placed within the political circumstances of the tenth and eleventh centuries in order to see why such imitations may have been necessary in the first place.

Brief historical narrative

When in 908 the caliph Muqtadir was raised to the Abbasid throne, he was but a child of thirteen. Twenty-five years later, following his murder by his own general, the Abbasid caliphate fell apart. A rival caliphate had been established by the Fatimids in North Africa in 909, and later in Egypt. Everywhere, provincial officials gained virtual independence. Baghdad itself was occupied in 945 by the Buyid brothers, who came from the mountainous region of Daylam by the Caspian Sea and took Iraq and western Iran. In the east, the Samanid dynasty had ruled Transoxiana and Khurasan as march-wardens since the ninth century, holding the line against the pagans of inner Asia. The independent Samanid rule lasted the entire tenth century. However, while their reign witnessed great economic and cultural achievements, the dynasty's political hold over its domains gradually diminished. By the end of the first millennium CE, a group of their own slave soldiers who had moved further east on the borderlands of non-Muslim lands in today's Afghanistan won the power struggle that signaled the fall of the Samanids and took over the southern territories of their former masters. The first among them was a general by the name of Sebüktegin (d. 997). His son was the famous Mahmud, enthroned in the city of Ghazna. He led enormous raids into India, looting temples, demolishing idols and establishing himself as the promoter of beleaguered Sunni Islam.

Ghaza in the Transoxiana before Mahmud

There are glaring discontinuities between the narratives of Mahmud's ghaza and similar anecdotes from the period before him. For, both in Central Asia and India, where the sources describe in detail a violent encounter between non-Muslims and Muslims, the provocation was often blamed on the non-Muslims – hence making the action of the Muslims conform with the legal requirements of jihad (defensive and incumbent upon all). Mere raids across the border appear not to have merited elaborate narration in these sources. Mahmud's battle accounts are, however, markedly different. His raids were elevated to epic proportions and described in the grandiloquent language previously used for jihad by his predecessors. This was a modification of utmost importance.

The beginnings of three historical reports regarding violent encounters between Muslims in the east and their enemies are worth considering. They either predated or were contemporary with Mahmud. One is about the Samanids, a second about the Qarakhanid king Tughan Khan, and a third about Mahmud's father Sebüktegin. First, the Samanid case:

In the year 909/910, during the reign of Emir Ahmad b. Isma'il, the Turks began a great invasion that was unlike anything previous to it or since then. Four hundred thousand men came together and set out for the country of Muslims. They broke up into four major groups. One group, numbering a hundred thousand, set out for Bukhara. Another, also numbering a hundred thousand, went up against Khwarazm. A third sent fifty thousand against Samarqand and fifty thousand against Isfijab. A fourth dispatched fifty thousand towards Shash and fifty thousand against Farab.[1] They also captured all the Muslim merchants in their countries and enslaved them.

When the [Samanid] emir heard these, he summoned the chiefs of the army and the volunteers. When they went to him, they found him in tears. They began to console him. He said, 'By God, it is not for fear of death that I weep, but rather for the Muslims who have been captured and enslaved although they had once been freed.' Then he turned towards the commander of the army of volunteers and [commissioned him].[2]

First, it is worth noting how the fight against the pagans of Turkestan is justified because they had initiated the hostilities and had furthermore enslaved the Muslims in their territory. These two provocations establish the legal grounds for mobilizing the populace and fighting. But also significant is the fact that the Samanid emir does not himself take the field; rather, he delegates responsibility to the commander of the volunteer force. Now compare this with the account of the war, dated 1012–13, between the Qarakhanid ruler Tughan Khan and a massive enemy force coming from China:

There arose from the direction of China a great host, heading for Tughan Khan, intending to capture the lands of Islam in the countries of the Turks and Transoxiana. Their numbers surpassed a hundred thousand tents. There had never been anything like it since the time of Islam. So, Tughan Khan recruited nearly one hundred thousand men from Turks as well as free ghazis (*aḥrār al-ghuzzāt*) and volunteers (*muṭṭawwi'a*). Men of prayer gathered and prayed for their victory. Then, Tughan Khan sallied forth to confront that crowd of licentious caffres who had come to meet him. He had the strict desire to seek battle and to meet his death, unless God should send him assistance.[3]

The event reported dates from a century after the Samanid account quoted above. What has changed is the role of the monarch himself. He certainly does call on volunteers to join him, but it is he who personally leads his army against the adversary. However, beside this fact, one can detect no major transformation. The battle is justified on religio-legal grounds as a response to aggression from the enemy who came from China. The language

is clearly formulaic, with some parallels with the previous account (a massive army from the east, the numbers unprecedented, the ruler calling on volunteers), evincing the discoursive nature of these reports. Apparently, the narratives of Samanid jihad served as models for their immediate successors in Transoxiana.

Finally, the third report, dating to the later tenth century, describes the war between Mahmud's father Sebüktegin and the Indian king Jaipal. The episode occurs in 'Utbi's *Yamini* immediately after the episode wherein Sebüktegin leads raids across the border on a number of forts:

Soon, Sebüktegin came forth to race upon the environs of India as a ghazi and a *mujāhid* [one who does jihad]. He conquered forts that were high up in the mountains – enticing for their wealth, but prohibitive on account of the men guarding them. Sebüktegin took them all in hand and strung up their treasures in the threads of his own kingdoms. When Jaipal learned what had befallen him from the man [i.e., Sebüktegin] who had traversed a stretch of his kingdom, seizing property from the corners of his lands, and bringing damage and disgrace to those who defended his country, he [i.e., Jaipal] rose up along with his clan, the chiefs of his army, his great warriors, and the most agile of his huge elephants, wishing to exact revenge from Sebüktegin by pounding the territories of Islam and by seeking to pillage property that is off-limits. Reliant upon his might and power, he kept on marching till he reached Lamghan, close to the territory of the emir. Indeed, the devil had laid an egg in his head and it was hatching. He had fired up black bile in his brain, and it was boiling. Now, when the emir learned of his arrival and success, he got ready to defy him. He gathered his companions for fighting off Jaipal and called for soldiers from among the volunteers of Islam. He struck out of Ghazna to where Jaipal was, intending to fight a hard jihad and proudly protect Islam. With him was his son Mahmud who was like a lurking lion, or a ferocious eagle, or the face of death baring its fangs.[4]

Here, it can be seen that the narratives of ghaza on the Indian frontier share a number of similarities with the Qarakhanid ones in Central Asia. The information about the original raiding of Sebüketgin is touched upon summarily and with little flare. But, much like the Samanid and Qarakhanid cases, the important events actually begin with a tremendous invasion by the enemy which in turn justifies a swift and comprehensive retaliation. Also as in the Samanid case, here too the emir asked for volunteers to combat the assailants, and, recalling the Qarakhanid account, here too it was the emir himself who took the field against his adversary and even brought his son along with him.

The episodic narratives of Mahmud's ghazas

All this changes once we get to Mahmud. His assaults on South Asia are told as epic affairs, aggressive and unprovoked. Furthermore, there exists a recurrent formulaic quality to the tales of Mahmud's exploits in the subcontinent. It was as though a roughly standardized storytelling technique had come into being early in the campaigns, and thenceforth determined the structure of each subsequent undertaking. The accounts of the Indian ghazas were made up of seven distinct episodes. Each episode narrated a stage in the campaign and each stage, in turn, was made up of trials to be overcome and rewards to be reaped.

The first episode usually took place in Ghazna, where Mahmud resolved to embark on an adventure, sometimes in reaction to something he had been told:

> It was communicated to the sultan that in the country of Thanesar, there were large elephants of the Ceylon type. So the sultan marched against [its chief], keenly set upon planting the standards of Islam and extirpating idolatry thereby.[5]

> And it was reported to Mahmud that there lies a great city called Somnath on the shores of the ocean, and that city is for the Indians what Mecca is for the Muslims. It is full of idols, and they have stored a great wealth in the treasuries of those idol-houses. When Emir Mahmud heard this news, he felt inclined to go that city, and do some ghaza.[6]

> When Mahmud returned victoriously from the gates of Kanauj, his face was like a wild rose from the dust of the road, and his dagger was as bloody-red as pomegranate-blossoms. Nevertheless, he chose a path and rode hotly again, for the shedding of the blood of God's enemies, for the strengthening of the might of Muhammad's religion.[7]

This first episode then established Mahmud's intentions: a desire for treasures, religious zeal, a sense of adventure, and the excitement of war all at once.

The second episode was set on the road, where a great natural barrier, usually a river or a desert, blocked their way. This was a trial stage which, thanks to Mahmud's or other men's great valor and the help of God, would be successfully overcome. In the accounts of 'Utbi or Gardizi, the overcoming of the natural barrier was not very much emphasized, and the historians were usually content to say that the army crossed 'deep and broad rivers'. Occasionally, however, their descriptions contain more details:

> They reached the river known by the name of Rahib. It was too deep to ford, and its bottom was muddy like tar. The soldiers took off their armors and stood as naked men disrobed. The sultan ordered inflated skins to be prepared for crossing, and shouted at some of his personal *ghulāms* [slaves] to swim over on them. When the sultan witnessed the full success of these eight men, these words spontaneously escaped from his lips, 'Therefore let him toil for later repose!' Immediately thereafter, his special retinue, and following them, the whole army, plunged right in, and they exerted themselves to the utmost in that difficult stream. At times they floated ahead on the skins, at times they held on to the manes of horses, until at last the river cast them all safely ashore.[8]

Thus, 'Utbi on the second of the seven stages common to Mahmud's battle narratives. But also, Farrukhi on another occasion:

> When the King saw [this treacherous river], he encouraged the people. He urged them on and said, 'what of the danger of this water?' He placed his hope with God, and before the host, he hurled his auspicious person at the waves. By good fortune, the gallant king crossed the river. The whole army followed after him. They exited thus out of that river, as if that river had been a half-dry rivulet. Neither did anyone receive injuries to his body, nor was anyone's life harmed. For two days and nights the army forded the river there, and the tide did not rise, nor did the water reach a turban. In addition to people, more than two hundred thousand camels, horses, and mules crossed that river. In this way he received wonder from God. You should count this wonder as a miracle.[9]

The third episode narrated the first encounter with the enemy – what the soldiers saw once they had crossed the barrier into the land of the unbelievers. The vision was one of frightening sights and monstrous scales:

> Crossing the river beyond Multan, Mahmud marched towards the city of Bhatia, the walls of which the wings of the eagle could not surmount, and which was surrounded, as if with the ocean, with a ditch of exceeding depth and breadth. There were elephants as headstrong as Satan.[10]

> The first was Lodorva, from whose towers and battlements iron and marble slabs were dropping down as big as mountains. Its walls and fortification were strong, and the men on the walls were like ferocious male lions.[11]

> Emir Mahmud, God bless him, went up a high place in order to have a good look at Ganda's soldiers. He looked, and he saw the whole world full of tents, pavilions, foot soldiers, horsemen, and elephants. Regret began to beset the corner of his heart.[12]

The fourth episode told the story of the battle itself, a bloody and furious engagement in which, of course, the armies of Mahmud gained victory:

> The sweet roar of 'God is Great' echoed aloud, calling down the assistance of he Lord. The friends of God attacked the masters of lies and polytheism, broke their ranks, and rubbed their noses upon the ground of disgrace. The sultan himself, like a free-born stallion, went on dealing hard blows around him on the right hand and on the left, and cut those who were clothed in mail right in twain, quenching the caffre's thirst with the cup of death.[13]

> The shooters of the army of Islam shot their arrows, and the naphthalites threw flames. As Mahmud's ships reached those of the Jats, they reamed them by the large blades with which they were equipped, and crushed and sunk them, and whoever got out of the water, Mahmud's horsemen and foot-soldiers grabbed and killed off.[14]

In the fifth stage, the king of the Indians committed suicide out of fear, despair or shame. This episode does not occur in every account, but its place is generally sometime after the victory of Ghaznavids: 'So Jaipal commenced with his hair and shaved it off. Then, he threw himself upon the fire till he was burnt';[15] 'When Baji Rai saw what had befallen him, he reached for his dagger on his belt, struck it into his breast, and went into "the fire of God, kindled, which leaps up to the hearts of men"';[16] 'When Kulchand found out about this, he stabbed himself with a hooked blade, and slew himself'.[17]

In the sixth stage, the victorious army of Mahmud finally captured the temple or fortress and encountered an incredible sight: 'Now, in a huge idol-house, a carved piece of stone was found whose inscription indicated that it had been built 40,000 years ago';[18] 'Among the booty was a house of white silver like the houses of rich men. It could be unfolded and folded back up again; it could be taken to pieces and put together once more';[19] 'Among the idols there were five made of beaten red gold, each one was five yards high and fixed in the air without support';[20] 'And they found a piece of ruby as dark as collyrium, weighing 450 *mithqāl*s [unit of measurement]. No one had ever seen a jewel like that';[21] 'In Mundher there was a pool, such that dazzled the eyes of reason. What a pool! No matter how much I rack my brain, I cannot find a worthy description of it. It betrayed evidence of the handicraft of wise men, it showed the mark of immense riches.'[22]

Finally, in the seventh stage, Mahmud and his crew packed their bags and returned home rich with money and slaves: 'So the sultan returned with that immense booty and so many captive slaves that almost outnumbered the populace';[23] 'And they looted the baggage and found countless slaves. From there they set out for Ghazna triumphantly'.[24]

To sum up, then, these seven episodes or stages – namely, setting out, crossing natural barriers, encountering monstrosities, waging battles, shaming the enemy to commit self-slaughter, capturing wondrous forts, and returning home laden with riches – formed the basic blueprint, so to speak, according to which the reports of the Indian ghaza were constructed. But

this recurrent similarity implies a common standardizing intent – one that in effect determined how the campaigns in the subcontinent were ordered, perhaps even perceived, and certainly recounted later. What authority lay behind this narrative manipulation? It was the Ghaznavid court that played the rhetorical puppet-master.

The role of Mahmud in crafting his ghaza narratives

The presence of the court's authorial hand in the Ghaznavid narratives is confirmed by references in an Iraqi text of an idependent historical tradition. The source in question is the *Muntazam* of the Syrian historian Ibn al-Jawzi, and his entry reads as follows:

> There arrived a letter from Mahmud son of Sebüktegin to the Caliph saying that he had made ghaza against a nation of caffres, and a sandy desert had hindered his journey, and a thirst that had almost killed them had greatly affected himself and his companions. Then God had done the favor of sending a cloud that had covered them and rained on them, and they had drunk. And they reached that nation, and they were a huge host, and they had six hundred elephants. Then he had gained victory over them, looted their goods, and returned.[25]

Not only are most of the stages of the narrative present here; even their author has been cited and the very text in question named – a Ghaznavid campaign letter. In the letter we have the declaration of ghaza, the natural barrier to cross, the assistance of God, the huge and intimidating enemy host, victory, and immense riches. Now here is a similar passage in 'Utbi's *Yamini* (abridged):

> The sultan marched against [Thanesar], keenly set upon planting the standards of Islam and extirpating idolatry thereby. He traversed a desert never before traversed but by birds or roaming beasts, and he intersected a wilderness never before trodden upon by the feet of men. In those desolate wastelands, they strained themselves in vain to find water to moisten their mouths, not to mention food. Finally, God showed them favor and revealed a path that led to their destination. The caffre was leaning against a mountain, relying upon his elephants, swollen with the assembly of soldiers and tents. A battle raged vehemently, with daggers in throats and swords in shoulders. The friends of God were entirely victorious. The sultan returned along with the friends of God, with abundant spoils, all triumphant.[26]

Once the authorial practices of each historian (that is, 'Utbi and Ibn al-Jawzi) have been accounted for, there remains only one possibility for their resemblance: they were both drawing on a common source or sources – in

this case, as Ibn al-Jawzi tells us, the campaign letter of Mahmud. By extension, it would make sense that the uniformity of the Indian parts of Ghaznavid chronicles and panegyrics, from which the seven stages were abstracted in the previous section, is also owed to their dependence upon Mahmud's victory proclamation sent from the battlefront. Again, the goal here is not to devise a reductive and generalized definition of ghaza, but rather to see what it meant to be a ghazi king from the ghazi's own perspective. If the passages in the three Ghaznavid authors depend on the letters of Mahmud, then is it possible that the sultan's own words on the matter have come to light?

We do possess a few indirect references in the relevant documentation that suggest the sultan could have shared the authorship of diplomatic correspondence with his secretaries. Granted, these references are mostly with regard to Mahmud's son Mas'ud, but perhaps one can draw from them broader conclusions about early Ghaznavid epistolary practice in general. The historian Bayhaqi, in his comprehensive account of the reign of Mas'ud, provides five different categories in which the Ghaznavid monarch was involved in the composition of letters. First, he would make his intentions known to his secretaries and order them to write letters to the appropriate correspondent. There are several such episodes for Mas'ud,[27] and a few for Mahmud. In the latter case, when a letter arrived from the caliph in Baghdad accusing one of Mahmud's grandees of having sympathies with the rival Ismaili caliphate of the Fatimids in Egypt, Mahmud angrily asked for a letter to be written 'to the imbecile caliph' dismissing the accusation, which the secretaries in turn toned down considerably.[28] Second, the emir would sometimes scribble a postscript at the bottom of a letter already drafted and ready for dispatch.[29] Third, a discussion would be held with the vizier and other officials, a document would be drawn up, and then it would be read back to the emir for his approval and signature.[30] Fourth – and significantly – Bayhaqi cites one example, a victory-proclamation, in which Emir Mas'ud had dictated the letter and a scribe had written it down.[31] Finally, and perhaps most important of all, there is one episode in which Mahmud writes a letter in his own hand. On this instant, when Mahmud was told that his son had commissioned the building of a pleasure-house decorated with erotic murals ('all sorts of men and women, merging together, completely naked')[32], he charged an official to investigate: '[Mahmud] said, "Bring me ink and paper." Nushtegin [the official] did so, and the emir wrote a letter of full authorization *in his own hand*' [Italics added][33]. From all these it appears that Ghaznavid sultans were highly involved in the compositions of government correspondence, possibly drafting their own messages, and in the case of victory-proclamations from the battlefront this royal involvement was particularly direct.

However, even if it there is little direct evidence to support Mahmud's authorship of the descriptions of the Indian ghazas, the importance of these letters, and their subsequent use for the composition of the historical literature, is still paramount. In other words, supposing for a moment that Mahmud had not composed the earliest letters, he would still have become familiar with their content and formulaic structure. In this way, it is possible that the early letters would influence his subsequent experience in the subcontinent and his perception of these events. Thus, regardless of the certainty of his direct authorship of the letters that underlies the relevant passages in 'Utbi, Gardizi or Farrukhi, these texts still provide the medium for our most immediate encounter with Mahmud's self-perception as a ghazi king. Thus, to come closest to Mahmud, one must engage the parts on India in all their formulaic, repetitive, electrifying and horrific details. And, to go beyond the obvious, one must recreate the field of discourse out of which these parts were composed. For, as might be expected, the texts constantly evoke a variety of contemporary writings, both in form and in content.

Mahmud's role models

Certainly, a close scrutiny of these passages, along with a comparison of the available literature of the time, shows that, in creating the role of Mahmud as the ghazi king, Mahmud and his secretaries drew on specific and identifiable historical role models. One such model was Moses, known from the tales embedded in Koranic exegesis as well as the 'stories of the prophets' genre. Another was Faridun, the mythical king of a pre-Islamic epic/historiographical tradition, derived most immediately from Sasanian precursors, that enjoyed great popularity in Arabic and Persian writings of the tenth and eleventh centuries. A third was Alexander, found in both Koranic and historical narratives. What is significant about these heroes is that they combine many of the same tropes that reappear in the Ghaznavid texts – tropes that would otherwise occur in isolation elsewhere.[34] Thus, the victory-proclamations from India belonged to a genre of Islamic history writing known as 'prophets and kings', or *rusūl wa mulūk*. Perhaps the best-known example of this was the universal annals of Tabari (d. 932), in which the author had tried to reconcile and combine material from Islamic/biblical historiography with stories from Sasanian/Mazdean tradition. Both the *History* of Tabari as well as his *Exegesis* had been translated into Persian in the second half of the tenth century in Khurasan, but Arabic versions would also have been available.[35]

The seven-staged narrative of Mahmud's ghaza in India was modeled roughly after the exodus of Moses. This literary prototype could have been known via a number of sources, among which was Tabari's *Exegesis* as well books in the new genre of *Tales of the Prophets*, one of the first known examples of which was essentially extracted from Tabari's work by a man named Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi of Nishapur (d. 1036 in Baghdad). No matter what the exact source, the exodus of Moses apparently provided the basic blueprints for the stages: the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the wandering in the desert, the cloud that provided shelter from the sun and gave

the Israelites manna, the battle with the giants in Syria, and the capture of Jericho.[36] Here is, for example, the following parallel between the accounts of the cloud. First, the cloud in Mahmud's letter quoted in Ibn al-Jawzi: 'Then God had done the favor of sending a cloud that had covered them and rained on them.' Next, al-Tha'labi's version in the Moses story: 'So God set upon them a light white cloud, for that is His word, "*And we caused the white cloud to overshadow you*,"[37] meaning in the wilderness to shield you from the heat of the sun.'[38]

Or again, the statements of Mahmud's court poets Farrukhi and 'Unsuri on their patron's crossing of the river speak to this point: 'when the king crossed that river like Moses, his enemy drowned in the river like Pharaoh';[39] 'when the just king led his army into the river, his act was as one of the miracles of Moses';[40] 'the whole army, weapons and shields and all, at once entered the river that permits no crossing. They came out hale and whole as the people of Moses came out of the Nile.'[41]

The story of the Israelites as led by Moses (and Joshua) was therefore an important prototype for the presentation of Mahmud as the ghazi king. The tale of their exodus from Egypt, crossing the river, wandering in the desert, fighting the giants, and capturing Jericho seems to have been quite appealing to the Ghaznavids. But the episodic nature of the story of exodus had a literary parallel in the account of the mythological king of pre-Sasanian literature, Faridun. There is a specific installment in the narratives of Faridun's kingship, particularly in Firdawsi's *Shahnamah*, where the young prince crosses the River Tigris, attacks the monstrous tyrant *Zahhak* the dragon king, and captures his castle in Jerusalem. It reads as follows:

> When Faridun arrived near the Tigris, he greeted the ferryman and said to him, 'Prepare your barge and take me and my army across the river! Leave none of these men on this side!' But the man guarding the river did not bring the ferryboats and disobeyed Faridun. He said to him, 'the king Zahhak has entrusted me not to let even a mosquito cross this river unless I receive a permit with his authenticated seal.' When Faridun heard this, his anger flared. He did not fear that deep river. He braced himself and mounted his swift horse. He felt revenge and war rushing to his head and spurred his horse *Gulrang* into the water. His companions too braced themselves and rushed headlong into the river. They submerged those worthy swift-footed steeds into the water right up to their saddles. Soon they reached the dry shore and set out for Jerusalem.
>
> When they reached that city, Faridun looked from a mile away. He saw a castle there as bright as Mercury in the firmament. Its high ceiling seemed higher than the sky, almost touching the stars. He recognized that it was the house of the dragon. He took his heavy mace and galloped towards the guard of the castle, quick as fire. None of the day-guards dared to stand by the gate. Faridun called out on God and entered the castle on horse.

> That idol that Zahhak had created, whose top scraped the sky, Faridun dragged down to the earth, for he saw that it was not with the name of the Lord. As for the sorcerers who were in the castle, all those famous buck demons, Faridun crushed their skulls with his heavy mace and ascended the throne of that magic-worshipper. He ordered that beautiful ladies with black hairs and moon-like faces be taken out of Zahhak's night-chambers. He had them be washed in order to cleanse them of filth and teach them the ways of God the creator. For they had been raised by idol-worshippers and they were as befuddled as drunkards.[42]

Here, the episodic story of Faridun's capture of Jerusalem not only resembles the stages of Mahmud's adventures but also complements the relevant stages in the narrative of the exodus of Moses. Where the Moses story provides more elaborate descriptions of the river crossing, the desert and the cloud, the tale of Faridun, while reinforcing the river crossing, provides the fantastic and ominous depiction of the enemy's castle with its monstrous demonic guardians and magical proportions (although the story of towering giants of Jericho in the Koranic tales of Moses would have resonated well with these aspects also). Furthermore, the role of Faridun as the champion of the true God who has to break the spell of the idol-worshipper and, significantly, capture his women, echoes quite remarkably the activities of Mahmud in pagan India.

Thus it appears that the Ghaznavid court drew inspiration from and combined Sasanian and biblical histories of kings and prophets in casting Mahmud in the role of the ghazi king. Nor were the Ghaznavids anomalous in their blending of the two historical traditions. Tha'labi, for example, hinted at such an intermixture in his own *Tales of the Prophets* when he inserted the following phrase in the section on the death of Moses, almost as an aside: 'The length of Moses' life was one hundred and twenty years, twenty of them during the reign of Afridun [Faridun], and one hundred during the reign of Manujahr.'[43] The crucial difference is that whereas Tha'labi and others married the two traditions chronologically, as scholars interested in the accuracy of history, the Ghaznavid court combined and used the two to model Mahmud's own actions after them, as 'propagandists' interested in the possibilities of history.

There remains a third heroic role-model whose actions and adventures served both as the standard according to which Mahmud's deeds were measured and as a model to be imitated. This was Alexander the Great. Alexander was the one hero who figured prominently both in the Sasanian-derived histories as well as Koranic narratives. Furthermore, he was known for his exploits in India, as well as his destruction of the structures of polytheism. Tha'labi's terse entry is quite to the point: 'Alexander had destroyed the fire-temples that had existed in the lands of the Persians, and the idol temples that were in India. He slew the Mobeds [Zoroastrian clergy], burned their books, and called the people to Islam and monotheism.'[44] It was perhaps no

surprise, then, that much of the early Ghaznavid writing, particularly that of the court poet Farrukhi who performed recitals before the sultan, always referred to the actions of Alexander – the proto-monotheist who had destroyed the houses of polytheism in Persia and India.

There is clear evidence that both Koranic and non-exegetical versions of the Alexander story were known to the court in Ghazna, and in the writings that came out of this scene, efforts were made to assure Mahmud's superiority to this hero of old. Farrukhi's diatribe against him is a good case in point:

> The tale of Alexander has become an antique myth. Say something new! There is a pleasant sweetness in novelty. Antique myths and 'books of deeds' full of lies are of no use. Do not trouble yourself dealing with lies. People have listened so much to the story of where Alexander went and what he did, that they have it memorized by now. I have heard that if a story is told twice, even if sweet as sugar, it will become bitter as aloe. However, if you want to make a good and pleasant tale, work on the tale of the King of the World [Mahmud] and keep up your effort. He is the Right Hand of the [Abbasid] State, the Sovereign of the world, a lord who has both a good exterior and a good interior. He is such a king who has no other desire, all day and all night, except to bring down idol and idol-house on the head of the idol-worshipper. Sometimes he leads his army from Oxus to Indus, other times he takes his host from West to East. If you read two stories out of his 'book of deeds', you will recall the deeds of Alexander with laughter. Yes, it is true. Alexander did roam all over the earth. He traveled, and cut across deserts, mountains, and slopes. But he traveled in search of the Water of Life. *Our* king seeks the satisfaction of God and his prophet. If you say that a verse [of the Koran] has been revealed in [Alexander's] honor, I will not deny it for that would be a sin. At the time when Alexander ruled, the door of prophecy had not been sealed yet. But had there been a prophet at the time of the King of the World, there would have been revealed two hundred verses in his honor. The whole story of Alexander has become so great, because he loved traveling and became a professional traveler. If Alexander had traveled with our king, he would get off the galloping courser and sit on a donkey. His longest journey has been on a road where there was a continuous chain of connected villages and valleys. *Our* king took his army on such a road, where a demon would lose his way, be confused, and panic.[45]

Farrukhi opens with a comparison of Mahmud with Alexander the Great – a comparison that was not uncommon in those days, and always had Mahmud coming out on top.[46] The reference to mendacious 'books of deeds', *karnamahs*, leaves no doubt that Farrukhi has in mind the epic version of the story of Alexander. The reference to the Koranic verses shows his familiarity with the exegetical material about the said king. Yet, even though he dismisses them as lies, he focuses most of his subsequent attack on the 'antiqueness' of these stories, which have now been outdone by the reigning Emir Mahmud. He spends seventeen lines (about 10 percent of the poem) in a diatribe against these stories. Clearly, the material exerts some influence on his mind.

All the while, Farrukhi's poetry betrays several unacknowledged echoes of the Alexander legend in the portrayal of Mahmud's deeds in India, indicating his importance for the creating of the image of the ghazi king. Here is, for example, a specific episode in the account of the return from Somnath:

> It seemed to the king that the road was to the left. So he turned left and said, 'Let come what may!' Thinking this, he rode for a mile or two, but then he regretted having come this way and halted. Suddenly a light appeared on the right hand. Everybody pointed towards it. The sultan began to go towards that light and sent ahead some speedy riders to seek its source. The quick riders on young Arab horses reached that light after employing all the skills they had. The king kept on marching and the light led the way until day broke and opened the gates of all luminescence. At that point the royal pavilion and the camping grounds appeared, and the hearts of the soldiers were relieved from thirst. There is no miracle greater than this.[47]

The story of a mysterious light leading the sultan forth through dangerous territory is indeed wondrous; however, it has an echo in an episode from the Alexander legend – for here, too, Alexander receives a miracle from God when a ray of light leads his lost army through the darkness. Tha'labi's version reads, 'God said, "I will make light and darkness subservient to you [Alexander] and make both of them part of your armies – the light will guide you in the front." '[48]

Thus it seems that, along with Moses and Faridun, Alexander was the third major role-model whom Mahmud imitated during his ghazas in India. Again, it is not necessary for Mahmud to have first read about these heroes, then have set out to have imitated them, and then have had his scribes write them in his campaign letters. Once these accounts were interwoven into the first letters, they would have subsequently influenced Mahmud's behavior in and perception of India.

This is not to say that the sultan's reading outweighed military or political factors, but that (as stated before in the Introduction and Chapter 1) the sharp divide between text and *hors-texte*, between narrative and reality, is in fact erroneous. To repeat David Carr's argument, in our daily lives we are always trying to occupy the position of storytellers and arrange our activities into structured narratives with a beginning, middle and end. In Mahmud's case, the added factor of 'propaganda' would almost require of him to act out publicly the image that he was broadcasting of himself through letters. The line between reading, composition, perception and action would surely have

been blurred. This statement constitutes no proof in and of itself; rather, it is a theoretical realignment away from another similarly theoretical position. In the next section, examples will be provided to argue more strongly for Mahmud's personal involvement in creating his own image.

Mahmud's exposure to and modeling of literature

Mahmud's education, as well as his courtiers' knowledge of this material, would assure his continual exposure to heroic and historical literature. Of Mahmud's teachers, we only know something by an indirect reference: Bayhaqi, in introducing a figure into Mas'ud's reign (a certain Abu Nasr Sini), mentions that his father was Sebüktegin's prayer imam (*pīshnamaz*), and that he had taught Mahmud the Koran when the latter was a child.[49] It is conceivable that the emir's study of the Koran may have included something of exegesis too. Also, later on in life, Mahmud would occasionally attend the lectures of religious scholars, particularly as he sought out the best and brightest in his kingdom, whom he desired to import to his capital of Ghazna. According to Bayhaqi:

> [The scholar] Abu Sadiq Tabbani began to associate with the judge of Balkh Abu al-'Abbas, judge Ali Tabaqati, and other scholars, and a debate took place among them regarding difficult paradoxes and contradictions in law. Abu Sadiq came in and really stole the show. Abu Bakr Hasiri and Abu al-Hasan Karaji informed Sultan Mahmud of this. He was delighted, invited Abu Sadiq, and attended the scientific gathering. He approved of Abu Sadiq and told him, 'You must prepare to come from here [Nishapur] to Transoxiana and thence to Ghazna.'[50]

There are several important factors here, testifying to Mahmud's knowledge of scholarship in his land. He was clearly keen on being up to date with the affairs of the ulema. He had sent his officials to Nishapur, one of the greatest centers of learning at the time, home of Tha'labi among others. Once he was notified of the existence of a particular talent in scientific circles, he would personally attend the lectures and confirm the appointment and patronage of particularly bright individuals. This would perhaps ensure his exposure to exegetical narrative as well, like the stories of Moses and Alexander, which he could in turn incorporate into his own personal self-presentation.

Finally, there exists a very apt reference to such an imitation of literature in Bayhaqi. Bayhaqi writes that he once witnessed an incidence in which, while at a hunt, Mahmud had captured an onager and had it branded with his own name, because 'storytellers had read to him that [the Sasanian king] Bahram Gur had done something similar'.[51] It is obvious from this piece of information that not only was Mahmud exposed to historical narratives, but that he would also actively try to imitate them in his own daily deeds. Mahmud's knowledge and imitation of Moses, Faridun and Alexander very likely followed a similar pattern.

The political and historical context

There must have been various reasons for the sultan's modeling himself after ancient heroes. Politically, however, his behavior makes sense in the context of the rise of independent local governors and military leaders in the ninth and tenth centuries and the dire need for establishing dynastic legitimacy. The Samanids and the Buyids, who could not claim descent from the family of the prophet (as could the Abbasids and the Fatimids), had fabricated genealogies from the Sasanians instead (the Buyids from Bahram IV and the Samanids from Bahram Chubin). Moreover, both had assumed Sasanian royal titulature by the middle of the tenth century.[52] Such an option was not, however, available to Mahmud. The slave origin of his father Sebüktegin was known to all, and was reiterated by Ghaznavid court historians. Indeed, as Jürgen Paul has stated, Mahmud's assumption of the mantle of ghaza signaled an attempt to distance the dynasty from its slave origins.[53] But this solution was doubly remarkable. The sultan had circumvented the need to be a progeny of the old kings, because he was a kind of 'reincarnation' of them. He was presented as an equal or superior member of a fraternity of warriors and prophets, and not merely a descendant of them. Indeed, Mahmud's image as the legendary ghazi king of literature did not derive merely from the extent of his military accomplishments, but in effect from the ability of the Ghaznavids to monopolize the recounting of the sultan's deeds – a monopoly in which Mahmud himself seems to have played a part. Mahmud of Ghazna wrote himself into history by rearranging history in his favor. His image survived because he and his courtiers succeeded in occupying the position of storyteller during the sultan's lifetime.

4 Inventing the image of the founder king

There exists a discrepancy between the kind of ghazi king represented by Mahmud on the one hand and other ghazis of the 'Middle Period' on the other. Whereas Mahmud was depicted simultaneously as a majestic king as well as an outstanding ghazi, other ghazi kings are generally portrayed with far less grandiosity. One need only think of Osman Bey, founder of the Ottoman dynasty, or Babur, remembered mostly as a wandering frontiersman, living much simpler and coarser lives than Mahmud of Ghazna.

This discrepancy can be reconciled by an analysis of the political and historiographic developments of the eleventh century. As both the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks became progressively bureaucratized, ghaza was seen, at least by imperial administrators, as a dangerous distraction. In texts such as Bayhaqi's (d. 1077) history of the sons of Mahmud, as well as the vizier Nizam al-Mulk's (d. 1092) political treatise addressed to the Seljuk monarch Malik Shah (d. 1092), one can clearly observe that ghaza was thought better left to be carried out by underlings posted to the frontiers, whereas the major role of the sultan, it was argued, was to be the proper administration and protection of the kingdom. It was in this context that a new royal image was born – that of the 'founder king'. Mahmud's father Sebüktegin (d. 999) was the embodiment of this image. He was the humble soldier – in his case a former slave – who ruled a band of warriors, lived simply and justly, and exhibited an affinity for asceticism. To create this image, eleventh-century historians drew on older topoi already employed by their colleagues at least a century before. Indeed, earlier Islamic historians such as Tabari (d. 923) and especially Mas'udi (d. 956) had arranged some of their material on a binary opposition between simplicity and extravagance, and this polarity, endowed with a moral causality, had been utilized to explain the decline of Abbasid caliphs and the rise to power of military leaders, particularly Turks, in the tenth century.

One Ghaznavid court historian, Abu Nasr 'Utbi (d. 1035?), had already exploited this technique in the 1020s when he had contrasted in his *Yamini* the humble and approachable Sebüktegin (father) with the haughty and autocratic Mahmud (son) – thus engaging in a *Kaiserkritik*.[1] In other words, from the very beginning, the personification of the

founder king had developed as the mirror image of extravagant despotism. After the defeat of the third Ghaznavid king, Mas'ud, by the Seljuks, later Ghaznavid historians such as Bayhaqi enhanced the portrait of the humble 'founder king' by contrasting him with his ineffective and debauched grandson. The point here is that the image of Sebüktegin was formed progressively as the embodiment of all the good attributes that Ghaznavid historians thought their contemporary monarch lacked, and for this personification to achieve its full form, the relevant chroniclers fell back on material already found in the works of their predecessors such as Tabari and Mas'udi.[2] In the end, ghaza too was relegated to this first phase of the dynasty's history.

In what follows, the various strands that went into the making of the 'founder king' Sebüktegin will be traced and identified. Particularly in Mas'udi's *Muruj al-Dhahab* ('Meadows of Gold'), one finds the expressions of each of the component parts. These were: (1) the austere backcountry general who defeats his dissolute counterpart from Baghdad; (2) the austere ruler who was morally and physically superior to his debauched adversary; and (3) the ascetic and merciful Turkic *ghulām* ('slave soldier') who was marked by divine protection (revealed to him in a dream) as a result of an act of compassion. To these, Ghaznavid authors added a tinge of asceticism and, finally, the credit of ghaza. The founder (Sebüktegin) was also gradually depicted as the simple and abstenious warrior who trounced his hedonistic counterpart, was blessed by God through dreams, became a compassionate king (whose memory was always contrasted with his decadent offspring), and who gained legitimacy through doing ghaza (especially, and loosely, on behalf of an already-established dynasty). The same equally applies to many other founder kings, such as Osman Ghazi and, eventually, Babur. Therefore, the development of the historical discourse that helped create Sebüktegin will be traced.

In the third section of this chapter, a long segment is added to meet the second goal of the present analysis – namely, in addition to tracing the discoursive formation of royal images by pre-modern chroniclers, an attempt will be made to show that the voice of the historical actor (Sebüktegin) can also be retrieved. In other words, using the example of Sebüktegin, it will be argued that the old emir was apparently as involved in presenting a particular image of himself as were his historians. His example will thus contribute to the breaking down of the artificial barrier between text versus *hors-texte*.

Austerity and dissipation

The simple general

The binary opposition of austerity vs dissipation occurs already in Tabari among the early tenth-century historians. Poverty and simplicity were equated with righteousness, and extravagance with corruption and

debauchery. Moreover, these qualities function as a historical cause whereby people in the former category gain advantage over the latter. Take, for example, the storey of Ya'qub son of Layth, the Sistani hero who, as D. G. Tor has shown, embodied many of the characteristics of the ghazi king. According to Tabari, Ya'qub's victory against the forces of the Abbasid government is directly related to his austere lifestyle:

> [The Abbasid general] Tawq laid down his arms and began drinking, calling for entertainment. But, Ya'qub had made sure to stay informed about him all the while. And so, word reached him that Tawq had abandoned his weapons and had turned to drinking and merriment after learning of Ya'qub's supposed departure. Thereupon, Ya'qub swung back, covering two days' journey in one. As Tawq was still drinking and enjoying himself, he only noticed towards the end of the day that a cloud of dust had risen outside the city of Kirman, where he was staying. He asked the villagers, 'What is this cloud of dust?' They said, 'It is the dust of the village flocks returning to their owners.' But very soon Ya'qub and his men arrived and surrounded Tawq and his followers. Ya'qub ordered Tawq to extend his hand so that he could shackle him, at which point he noticed that there was a bandage on Tawq's forearm. He asked, 'Tawq, what is this?' He replied, 'God bless you general, I had a slight temperature, and so I had my arm bled.' When Ya'qub heard this, he summoned one of his men and ordered him to slip off his boots. The man did so, and dried breadcrumbs fell out. Ya'qub turned to Tawq and said, 'I have not taken these boots off for two months, and the bread I eat is in them. Nor have I slept in a bed. You on the other hand, you sit and drink and feast. Is this how you wanted to do battle against me?'[3]

The contrast could not have been sharper. Ya'qub's austere lifestyle had kept him alert and flexible, while Tawq's dissolute habits had completely paralyzed him. Also, the egalitarian nature of Ya'qub's habits are portrayed conspicuously. Essentially, he lived and ate in the same way as his soldiers. This is a crucial point, and will figure prominently in the behavior of Sebüktegin. Tabari employed this same causal explanatory method repeatedly in his history to justify the partial success of other rebellions against the caliphate. In 834, for example, an Abbasid army finally defeated a seditious people of southern Mesopotamia called the Zutt who had been running amok in the countryside for some years. Tabari quoted a long poem by one of their men, whose taunts and challenges against the people of Baghdad bear a noticeable resemblance to Ya'qub's reproach of Tawq. In effect, the marginalized backcountry folk expose the decadence gnawing at the heart of the empire. The poem runs as follows:

> Die, people of Baghdad! Go on and stew in exasperation as you crave fancy *barni* and *shubriz* dates! We struck you openly and hard, and drove you like pathetic weaklings. You did not thank God for the good things he had already given you. You did not heed his gifts with appreciation. You sought the help of slaves and the sons of those who established your government, of Yazman, Balj, Tuz, Ashnas, Afshin, and Faraj. They stand out with their silk garments and pure gold, but we will slash their skulls with shining Indian blades.[4]

Here too, the extravagant luxury of the people of Baghdad (i.e., the Abbasids) is equated with weakness, while the savage austerity of the Zutt is glorified in their own words. Clearly, Tabari and others like him – and perhaps even the Sistanis and the Zutt – imagined a moral and physical advantage in dearth. Also, implicitly at least, the caliphs seem ominously ignorant and careless of the impending danger that this polarized disparity posed for their existence. Like Tawq in the episode above, the rulers in Baghdad were distracted by comfort at a great risk to themselves. Finally, one should note the fact that the foreigners serving in military posts for the caliphs, 'Turks' such as Yazman, Tuz and Ashnas, were held in low regard. This is important, since there was a great shift of attitude towards some of these slave soldiers when, a few decades later in the 950s, the historian Mas'udi wrote his chronicle after Tabari – a shift towards presenting some of the *ghilmān* (plural of ghulam) in the role of austere warriors.

Ascetic and extravagant rulers

Mas'udi also employed the binary opposition between luxury and simplicity to explain the political upheavals of his times. However, whereas Tabari's use of this duality was often buried in a maze of anecdotes and reports, Mas'udi's terser narrative, unencumbered by extensive citation of sources and alternative versions, exhibits this device more visibly. Moreover, the author extended this opposition boldly to rationalize the decline of caliphal power. Finally, whereas the *ghilmān* of the Abbasids were not cast in a particularly positive light in Tabari's annals, in Mas'udi's *Muruj* the image of a pious and mighty Turkish general assumed full form.

The way Mas'udi associated royal luxury with physical and moral decline was through character contrasts, not unlike what is found in Tabari. What distinguished Mas'udi from his predecessor was that he did not set up a dissolute agent of the caliph vis-à-vis an austere rebel from the outlying areas; rather, he pitted the Abbasids themselves against their forerunners and rivals for the position of caliphate and imamate. Central to Mas'udi's concept of leadership was the idea of imitation by the populace. Leaders of any rank were role models for their followers. They could save or destroy society based on the kind of example they set in conducting their personal affairs, and Mas'udi's history is crowded by men of each type.[5]

Mas'udi's portrayal of Mutawakkil (d. 861), the first Abbasid caliph to be assassinated by a group of his own slave-soldiers, is a good case in point.

Mutawakkil's behavior is compared unfavorably with that of the Caliph 'Umar (d. 644), one of the great four deputies and successors of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as that of the tenth Shiite Imam Ali al-Naqi (d. 868), a descendant of the prophet and the potential rival of the Abbasids for the rulership of the Islamic community. A great contrast is made between the three regarding personal demeanor, dress and moral strength. Furthermore, the imitation of each leader by his followers is crucial to their personification. The contrast is, of course, meant to cast doubt on the legitimacy of one while providing alternatives in the persons of the other two – a device that later proved most productive in the creation of the image of Sebüktegin as the founder king. First Mutawakkil:

> Mutawakkil introduced the wearing of silken robes, preferring them to garments made of other fabrics. Next, the members of his household followed suit and began donning them, until his dress became the prevailing fashion of the day. People went to great costs imitating his style, and very fine specimens of it were produced in order to meet the exaggerated popular demand, both among the high and the low. What remains of them to this day is known among the people as Mutawakkiliyah, this being a kind of silken robe of utmost loveliness and art, and with an exquisite dye. Those were days of great fineness and flourish, of rectitude for the empire, and of security and justice for the people.
>
> Mutawakkil was not particularly known for his liberality in giving and gifting, but neither was he notorious for stinginess and frugality. In the court of no other previous Abbasid caliph was there such license for ludicrous buffoonery, of the kind that had long been abandoned by the general public, as there was in Mutawakkil's. It was he indeed who introduced all these anew and spontaneously, and no sooner had he introduced such things that the majority of the elite and the greater part of the commoners followed suit in imitation of him. Not one person among his viziers, captains, or the senior members of his chancery had a reputation for openhandedness or munificence. Nor did any of them stand aloof of jesters and songsters.[6]

Mas'udi's criticism of Mutawakkil does not seem particularly biting at first: he introduced a number of luxuries, and this was in turn picked up by the populace in an exaggerated manner, but this need not cause distress because, in those days, the empire enjoyed plenty and security. The next item also seems somewhat neutral at first: he had a temperate constitution when it came to money. But the careful reader would have already noticed that in fact Mutawakkil had no difficulty going to great expense in procuring fancy garments; it was with regard to generosity that he could more easily check himself. And, just as his followers' imitation of his first habit was in exaggeration, so was this second tendency replicated to the extreme. Not one of

them, says the author, had a reputation for openhandedness. The third item brought against the caliph is unambiguously censorious. He reintroduced an old, shameful custom of having ludicrous jesters at court, and in this fault too was the caliph aped by his adherents. The main problems, then, were frivolous excess in useless or shameful luxuries, but parsimoniousness in extending generosity to others. In turn, both flaws had spread through the populace. In sharp contrast to Mutawakkil's depiction is Mas'udi's characterization of 'Umar b. al-Khattab, the second successor to the Prophet Muhammad, and one of the foremost leaders of the early Islamic community. It reads as follows:

> 'Umar was humble, dressed in coarse cloths, and was vehement in the matters of God. His underlings imitate his deeds, character, and behavior, and they all resembled him, both those who hung about his person, and those who were far away. He used to wear a woolen garment (*al-jubba al-ṣūf*) patched with hides and the like, and he would wrap himself in a cloak. He would carry a water-skin on his shoulder with all the gravity with which he was endowed. He mostly rode camels and his saddle was made of taut fibers. His underlings did likewise. Nevertheless, with such possessions God conquered kingdoms for them and multiplied their wealth manifold.[7]

'Umar's sober and dignified lifestyle is characterized by his coarse clothing, the extreme opposite of Mutawakkil's gaudy frippery. The word used for 'Umar's woolen garment is from the same root whence the etymology of the name of the Muslim mystico-ascetic movement of the day was derived in the tenth century, making the connection between the ancient caliph's piety and the austerity of his dress more pronounced. Also important is the effect of this behavior on 'Umar's agents – they all emulate his commendable exemplar, as do the followers of Mutawakkil. The third significant point is the causal connection between the stark material poverty of the caliph and the greatness of his reward. Consequently, and only just implicitly, Mas'udi was suggesting that the hedonistic lifestyle of the later Abbasids was leading to material and political decline.

Mas'udi's portrayal of the Alids, who were the greatest rivals of the Abbasids for the political and spiritual leadership of the community (at least for the Shiites), follows the same logic. The author often depicts them as morally strong and living with utmost sobriety. Perhaps nowhere in the *Muruj* is this contrast shown as emphatically as the scene in which Mutawakkil is brought face to face with the tenth Imam of the Shiites – Ali al-Naqi. It runs as follows:

> They slandered Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Muhammad [al-Naqi] to Mutawakkil, saying that there were weapons in his house and letters and sundry things from his partisans. Mutawakkil ordered a squadron of

> Turks and others to raid him and his house, at night and unawares. They found him alone, shut up inside the house, wearing just a shirt made of animal hair. There were no carpets on the floor but dirt and pebbles. With only a woolen cloth covering his head, he was facing his Lord, reciting verses from the Quran regarding Judgment Day and the promises of reward and the threats of punishments. They arrested him as they had found him and took him to Matawakkil in the middle of the night. He was brought into the audience hall. Mutawakkil was drinking, with the goblet in his hand. When his eyes fell upon Ali, he honored him and sat him beside himself. In his house, they had found not one of the objects spoken of before. Nor could his circumstances be used as a pretext against him. Mutawakkil offered him the goblet he was holding, but Ali said, 'Commander of the Faithful, never has alcohol infused my flesh and blood. Please exempt me from it.' So the caliph desisted. But then he said, 'Recite a poem for me!' And Ali recited: 'They dwelled upon the mountaintops, guarded by triumphant men. But the mountaintops did not avail them. They tumbled down from their fortresses, scrambling after glory. They were lowered into pits, oh what a wretched coming-down it was! They were entombed and a voice cried out, 'where is the throne and the crown, where are the robes? Where are the pampered faces draped with lovely sheets?' The grave replied on their behalf, 'Those faces – maggots are swarming over them', etc.[8]

Just as with his depiction of the seventh-century caliph 'Umar (forerunner), Mas'udi's characterization of Ali ibn Muhammad (rival claimant) highlights the moral gap between them and the Abbasids.[9] Ali too is dressed in rough and simple clothes, including the all-important piece of wool. Whereas Mutawakkil lounges in a palace imbibing spirits, Ali kneels in worship and busies himself with heeding divine precepts. He easily overcomes the temptation of alcohol, and indirectly (but not very subtly) he chides the Abbasids with his poem, presaging their self-generated and impending ruination. Ali's moral strength and worldly indifference, on the other hand, protect him from the dangers of the encounter with a suspicious caliph.

Thus Mas'udi explained the decline of the Abbasid caliphs, which, by the end of the author's life in the middle of the tenth century, was more or less complete and irreversible. The empire itself was in the hands of various military leaders with de facto power, and the caliphal role in actual governance had been greatly diminished. Now, it is very interesting to note that not only does Mas'udi, in his book, contrast righteous with wicked rulers, but he also sets up good/evil pairs among army leaders. In the Islamic East in this period when most ruling dynasties were founded by military men, such depiction of generals would prove to be an immensely fruitful literary device for the portrayal of sovereigns.

On the one hand, the *Muruj* chronicled the careers of violent, ruthless and bloody generals, and on the other, the text held up the example of upright,

courageous and simple warriors. It is possible that Mas'udi had intended his portrayal of those in the latter category to be prescriptive. Maybe he yearned for the actualization of that which he idealized in the past. In any event, one of the clearest historical embodiments of the virtuous warrior in Mas'udi's *Muruj al-Dhahab* is the slave soldier Bugha the Great (d. 862) and, by extension and to some degree, his son Musa (d. 877).[10] Mas'udi's portrayal of Bugha and his son is particularly important and is quite at odds with their depiction by older historians such as Tabari and Ya'qubi, which was at best neutral and at times bordering on hostile. Take, for example, Mas'udi's brief notice on Musa, where he wrote of the son of the old general, 'Most of the army was with Musa b. Bugha. He was a pious and ascetic man, to the point that the army emulated him. Nor did he drink wine'.[11] In this brief entry Musa embodies many aspects that the historian Mas'udi considered to be praiseworthy in a leader, including the caliphs. Musa lives a simple life, avoids strong drink, and thus sets a good example for his soldiers. Tabari, on the other hand, actually implicated Musa in the murder of Mutawakkil.[12] Thus, Mas'udi's creation of the noble foreign warrior, particularly as personified by Bugha the Great, completed the last element used by Ghaznavid historians in their creation of the almost archetypal founder king Sebüktegin.

The austere, compassionate, god-protected Turkish ghulam

Indeed, it is first in Mas'udi (among the historians) that the image of the noble and pious Turkish general was formalized in the person of Bugha. And, as this image is quite important for the later development of Sebüktegin and other founder kings, Mas'udi's foundational eulogy of Bugha will be quoted in full:

> Bugha was a man of religion among the Turks. He was a ghulam of the Caliph Mu'tasim. He had attended many a great battle, engaging in combat personally and returning unscathed. He used to say, 'the time allotted to me, *that* is my armor'. In fact he never covered his body with metal. Once, when he was rebuked for it, he said, 'I saw in a dream the Prophet [Muhammad], attended upon by a group of his companions. He said to me, "Bugha, you have performed goodness to a man from my community. He has prayed for you, and his prayers have been answered." I asked, "Prophet of God, who is that man?" He replied, "The one you saved from wild beasts." I said, "Prophet of God, ask your Lord to give me long life!" He raised his hands to the heavens and said, "God, give him long life and let his allotted time be completed." I said, "Prophet of God,... ninety-five years!" Then the man who was in front of him joined in and said, "...and shield him from afflictions." I asked him, "Who are you?" He retorted, "Ali son of Abu Talib" [the first Shiite imam]. I awoke, and I was muttering "Ali son of Abu Talib"'. Indeed, Bugha was marked by a singular tenderness and affection

towards the Talibids. They asked him, 'Who was the man you saved from wild beasts?' He went on, 'Once, a man was brought before Mu'tasim, having been charged with [doctrinal] innovation. A long interview was conducted between them in private, and then Mu'tasim gave me an order saying, "Take him away and throw him to the beasts!" I led the man to where the beasts were in order to hurl him in. I was furious with him. Then I heard him say, "Oh God, you know that I only spoke within your bounds. I aimed at nothing but you. I sought to be close to you by obeying you. I wanted to establish the truth against those who opposed you. Will you give up on me?" I shuddered and was moved to pity. I felt my heart brimming with fear for him. I pulled him back from the edge of the animal pit, where I was about to forcefully shove him in, and then took him to my cell where I hid him. I went back to Mu'tasim. He said, "Well then?" I replied, "I threw him in." "And what did you hear him say?" asked he. I said, "I'm a barbarian [*'ajamī*], and he was speaking Arabic. I don't know what he said. Plus, the man spoke most gutturally." When dawn broke, I went to him and said, "the gates are opened. I will let you out with the guards. I am putting you above myself, and am shielding you with my life. Take pains not to show yourself while Mu'tasim reigns." He said, "Alright." Then I asked, "What is your story?" He replied, "I attacked one of Mu'tasim's officials in our district, because he committed swindling and debauchery; because he murdered truth and aided falsehood; and this he carried out until the law fell into decay and monotheism was destroyed. I found no one to help me against him. One night I pounced on him and murdered him, because his crime had made him deserve what was done to him."'

This passage is crucial for the development of the image of the virtuous Turkish general, as will be seen in the pages detailing the career of the Ghaznavid Emir Sebüktegin (especially in Bayhaqi). Formally, Mas'udi's passage consists of two quotations connected by the author's transitional sentence indicating Bugha's mercy ('Indeed, Bugha was marked by a singular tenderness and affection', etc.). The first quotation recounts Bugha's dream in which he is assured of a long life untroubled by afflictions. This is provided as an explanation for the unusual behavior of the general – here, his neglect of wearing armor. The second passage explains the reason for Bugha being blessed with a long life, this being his having saved the life of an innocent man (the antinomian implications of this passage are worth noting). The structure of this rescue narrative will also prove of foundational importance. Bugha is at first motivated by bloodlust. He is furious with the convict, whom he does not know. Then, all of a sudden, the speech of the victim-to-be provokes a surge of mercy and fear in Bugha's heart. Finally, the actual rescue involves some amount of self-sacrifice on Bugha's part. He receives his reward, however, in the form of long life promised to him by the prophet in a dream.

At this point (by circa 950), all the elements that went into forming the image of Emir Sebüktegin had been created – a general whose austere military lifestyle and camaraderie with the lowest of soldiers causes his triumph against a dissolute and negligent enemy (Ya'qub vs Tawq); a ruler whose sobriety of demeanor leads to God granting him victory and wealth ('Umar) vs one whose debauchery brings about his assassination (Mutawakkil); and, finally, a Turkish slave-general who lives simply, remains steadfast against a background of corruption and misrule by contemporary caliphs, and gains divine protection (portended in a dream) for his adherence to a higher moral law. When the earliest historians of Sebüktegin and his sons began writing, they combined these elements in their portrayal of the founder emir.

Sebüktegin embodying these virtues and contrasted with Mahmud

From the very beginning of Ghaznavid historiography, the chronicler 'Utbi (d. 1035?) began to use the topoi above to present the Emir Sebüktegin the founder and contrast him with the more magnificent, but potentially tyrannical, Mahmud. After 'Utbi, the historian Bayhaqi (d. 1077) contrasted Sebüktegin not with Mahmud but with his son, Mas'ud. This was of course quite a significant move, for Bayhaqi used the image of the founder to justify, through contrast, the defeat of the Ghaznavid Mas'ud by the Seljuk Turks. In other words, following closely in the footsteps of the mid-tenth century historian Mas'udi, Bayhaqi pitted the just and simple Sebüktegin on the one hand, and the simple and austere Seljuks on the other, against a debauched and authoritarian Mas'ud. The implication was that, had Mas'ud followed the example of his grandfather, he would not have fallen prey to the Seljuks, who were portrayed as having come from similar social backgrounds. The result was twofold. First, Bayhaqi had contributed significantly to the invention of a tripartite cycle of the rise and fall of states as embodied by the three Ghaznavid monarchs Sebüktegin (rise), Mahmud (climax) and Mas'ud (decline). Second, by portraying the Seljuks in terms quite similar to Sebüktegin, Bayhaqi had extended the image of the founder king to nomadic Turks as well. Both of these had long-term ramifications beyond what Bayhaqi himself may have intended (more of this in the next chapter).

The full elaboration of the image of Sebüktegin by Ghaznavid historians will be charted bellow. To the topoi already used by annalists such as Mas'udi and Tabari, the Ghaznavids added a tinge of asceticism. However, in addition to this, it seems that the ascetic tinges of Sebüktegin's character were as much the work of the emir himself as of his historians. Therefore, one must tease out as far as possible any traces of the emir's authorial voice in his own self-presentation. Again, this must be done because one of the stated aims of this book is indeed to make a connection between the realm of textuality broadly defined and the real world that is supposed to be lying outside of texts.

First, though, the progressive construction of Sebüktegin's image must be charted. 'Utbi's portrayal of Sebüktegin bears a remarkable affinity to that of Ya'qub b. Layth, the Sistani hero who led an army towards the heartlands of the Abbasids caliphate. At the same time, there are a number of noticeable differences between the two generals. 'Utbi's Sebüktegin is not merely simple, hardy and egalitarian like Ya'qub; in some instances his behavior seems to be embarrassing to 'Utbi or in violation of some of the historian's general beliefs regarding kingship.

There exist two passages attributed to Sebüktegin himself in 'Utbi's *Yamini*. The first quotation belongs to an early part of text. 'Utbi cited a certain Abu al-Husayn Ja'far b. Muhammad al-Khazin as his source for how Sebüktegin described his experience during one of his campaigns on the Indian frontier:

> And he [Sebüktegin] recounted to me [Khazin] as he used to recall and narrate, 'Sure enough, I fought them [the enemy] in some of their battles along with these comrades. We were too few in number, but they were too many. The exercise of war began to drag for us and them to the point where we had fewer provisions than men. Soon [the men] were lacking in supplies and aid. And there was nothing before us but swords that cut down, and nothing beyond us but deserts and wasteland. The soldiers began to cry out to me from what afflicted them, asking me what strategies I knew for persevering through that hardship. So I told them, 'I have brought along a little porridge for my retainers (*khawāṣṣ*), and that will now be divided equally between me and you all. It should amount to a sufficient quantity. May God grant release from suffering and open up these dire straits.' Everyday, I used to dish out with a ladle a small bowl of that stuff first to every one of them, and afterwards to myself. We made do with that much for the whole day and night. And we were in that position, between a loathsome cure, cautious enduring, and coming to meet swords and arrows with uplifted faces and hearts, until God granted victory.[13]

Elsewhere I have argued that 'Utbi bore an ambivalent or critical attitude towards the man he was supposed to praise in his *Yamini* – Sultan Mahmud.[14] Whereas 'Utbi generally sings the praises of Mahmud, there are passages where the sultan's behavior is censured, not openly, but through subtle character contrasts – especially with Mahmud's father, Sebüktegin. The passage above, attributed to the old emir, is in harmony with Sebüktegin's general depiction in the *Yamini*. Unlike his distant and negligent son Mahmud, Emir Sebüktegin seems to be completely approachable to the lowest of his subjects, especially in times of dire need. He listens to their complaint and does his best to rectify their predicaments. At times, however, his actions flagrantly violate 'Utbi's stated political ideology of kingship expressed in the preface of his text. Just a few pages previously, our

author had stated that one of the prime responsibilities of kings consisted in keeping the elite (*khāṣṣ*) separate from the masses (*'āmm*), otherwise 'chaos will prevail, and disorder and agitation will break out'.[15] In stark contrast to this principle, Sebüktegin quite mindlessly (or perhaps intentionally) smashes the barrier between himself and his men of distinction (*khawāṣṣ*, pl. of *khāṣṣ*), and the rest of the soldiery. 'Utbi must have obviously been aware of this contradiction. One can see how it could have served his purpose by having Sebüktegin's presumably well-known words show that the leader [i.e., Mahmud] must ignore such sharp barriers when it comes to taking care of his subjects in agony.

There is also a noticeable resemblance between Sebüktegin and Ya'qub b. Layth. Both generals share in the hardships of their soldiers and, significantly, both eat the same down-to-earth food as their soldiers (breadcrumbs and porridge). On the other hand, Sebüktegin's predicament apparently had an embarrassing nuance to it. Immediately after the quotation, 'Utbi cited Khazin justifying this act as a reflection of the king's early financial privation, which he nevertheless managed to handle honorably, but that he entertained in an entirely fitting manner once he came to a greater fortune.[16]

The second passage resembles the first. In the year 997, while in Khurasan, Sebüktegin succumbed to the illness that claimed his life within 40 days, before he managed to reach Ghazni. On the way, 'Utbi claimed to have come to him and heard him speak these words to his secretary Abu al-Fath al-Busti:

> O shaykh, when Fate takes away our soul by force, we are like the flock out of which the shearer singles out a ewe. He throws her on the ground and ties up her legs for shearing. All the while she grows unsteady from this breach of what she is accustomed to, and she becomes agitated from the fear of dying. At last the shearer has done with her what he wished, and he unties her ropes, and sets her free. She feels joy at the deliverance granted her, and the comfort of life that has been returned to her.
>
> Then the second time comes around, and here comes the shearer again. This time, because she is used to him, she enters into the situation in a mood between hope and despair, and familiarity and fear, suspecting the matter to be as she knew it from the other time. Still she dreads this breach of habit, until she is released again, and she bounces off and finds comfort in deliverance, and merrily she returns to pasture.
>
> But the third time the shearer hands her over to the butcher, and he passes the knife over her jugular, having tied her with what she was accustomed to, having abolished fear from her, and having reassured her from harm. Such are we as diseases chase us down and illnesses persist after us.[17]

Again, Sebüktegin appears as approachable as ever to his secretaries (both 'Utbi and Busti). Formally, the passage agrees with the previous passage in

its being addressed to an audience present at hand ('O shaykh'). The point is expressed anecdotally, in a language and imagery strikingly pastoral. Essentially, the emir is showing his humility in the face of God's enormous power, comparing himself to a female sheep being handled by a shearer. However, this image presents a great disparity with 'Utbi's use of animal metaphors in the *Yamini*, for him particularly but also for others in general. For when 'Utbi uses animal metaphors to describe Sebüktegin or Mahmud, he consistently employs figures of animals with warlike or ferocious qualities – masculine predators and not feminine prey – rams, studhorses, lurking lions, rapacious eagles and wolves.[18] In fact, where the author does compare someone to a sheep, he does so mockingly. For example, when Sebüktegin and his army captured the city of Qusdar and seized its ruler, 'Utbi compared this act to the seizing of a sheep that is torn from limb to limb and roasted to be served to guests.[19] More directly, and in complete contrast to Sebüktegin, at one point 'Utbi even equated the emir surveying his enemies with a wolf staring down flocks of sheep.[20] Thus the inconsistency of Sebüktegin's metaphors with 'Utbi's, as well as the thematic and formal coherence of the quotation with the one cited above, gives weight to the proposal that not only was Sebüktegin's portrayal used by 'Utbi to criticize Mahmud, but also there exists an additional sense of embarrassment in these lines that far surpasses the need for the function of character contrasts. In other words, it seems likely that 'Utbi would have had to use the well-known words of Sebüktegin himself if he were to criticize Mahmud (who embodies the ideals of kingship that are being violated by his father).

The tinge of asceticism, and the compassionate Turk

This noticeable sense of asceticism, added by Ghaznavid writers to the presentation of the simple Turkic founder/general, resonates very strongly with certain beliefs, doctrines and biographies compiled by tenth-century authors under the rubric of Sufism.[21] Specifically, there are elements in the life stories and teachings of two Khurasani mystics living in or near the city of Balkh on the Oxus River (in the border region between today's Afghanistan and Uzbekistan) that echo Sebüktegin's allegedly autobiographical quotations. These were Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d. between 907 and 912) and Ibrahim Adham (d. 777).[22] Now, if the goal of the present study was simply to reconstruct the genealogy of the portrayal of the noble and austere Turk in Islamic historiography, then it would suffice merely to indicate these connections and then move along. However, it is equally important here to establish a continuum between text and *hors-texte*, between literary topoi and the reality that it purports to describe. When one reads the relevant passages, it seems possible that Sebüktegin himself was actually involved in the presentation of his own image. It seems, in other words, that Sebüktegin was actively imitating or at least retelling his life as the re-enactment of the biography of the 'Sufi' master Ibrahim Adham. This is a

particularly important fact, for, following Lewis Rambo, the re-enactment of the biography of a religious figure is indeed considered to be an indication of conversion.

To put it another way, if it can be established that Sebüktegin's life story is based on the life stories of certain ascetics and, moreover, if we can establish that these ascetics were particularly active in a region where Sebüktegin spent some time as a captured pagan slave, then we are in the position of reconstructing the process of his conversion to Islam, provided that we define conversion in a specific and acceptable manner. This would in turn be a discovery of multidimensional significance. On the one hand, and in line with the main thesis of this book, it provides an example of the connection between Ghaznavid historians and Sebüktegin, who was a subject of these histories, and thus, between texts and the real, whereby the real (Sebüktegin) itself is highly affected by a text (not one used by his own historians but one to which he may have been exposed independently). On the other hand, such a discovery offers a glimpse into a case of conversion to Islam in the early centuries of Islamdom, and such reports are often contradictory, after the fact, and rarely from the viewpoint of the convert.[23] In short, this is a detour worth taking. It will be argued in what follows that a dream narrative of Sebüktegin is remarkably close not only to the life story of the slave general Bugha in Mas'udi (thus one used by Ghaznavid historians), but also to the biography of the 'Sufi' master Ibrahim al-Adham. But before proceeding further, conversion must be defined in a specific way, and its connection to autobiographical narratives (such the ones ascribed to Sebüktegin) established.

Theoretical justification

The most relevant definition of conversion is a paraphrase by Michael Cooperson of Lewis Rambo, and this will be quoted in full:

> In any religious tradition, converts learn to narrate their experience in conformance with models supplied by the community to which they have converted ... Indeed, their ability to do so serves as a sign of the validity of their experience.[24]

To relate this to Sebüktegin's case, if we can demonstrate that his supposedly autobiographical recollections and dreams (which will be analyzed below) were modeled after the vita of Ibrahim Adham (as later preserved in two books, one in Arabic by Sulami and another in Persian by Hujviri), then it is possible (though by no means exclusively so) that the narratives were composed by the emir for the purpose of expressing and validating his conversion by (or to the beliefs of) those who venerated Ibrahim Adham. This is, of course, an argument from effect to cause, but it is worth considering.

To add to this first theoretical justification, one might consult the work of John Freccero on autobiography. By studying Augustine's *Confessions*, Freccero has concluded that a conversion narrative is most important in that it separates the self as character and the self as narrator.[25] This is accomplished by the imposition of an arbitrary moment of time (the single moment of conversion) that separates 'the non-differentiated self from the self that thereby gains an irreducible identity'.[26] Put otherwise, while in life the individual, even after his conversion or definitive vow, continues to be subject to conflicting states of consciousness (if not outright lapses to the life before the determining moment), in the kind of narrative that Augustine invents (or uses) the moment of conversion is portrayed as the death of the older self and the complete rebirth, or even a first actualization, of a new self. To relate this to Sebüktegin's words, it will be argued below how the emir's two narratives are structured around a defining act of before and after, while the entire section in the relevant text (Bayhaqi) really just begins with the primordial act of a river crossing. The old self of paganism and fall to slavery (if it was a self at all) is not even mentioned. The narrative and the re-enactment of the model biography begin at the moment of crossing the Oxus River, which further marks the birth of the (new) self: the individual named Sebüktegin who has no history prior to the crossing. With these insights, I will now examine the autobiographical quotations attributed to Sebüktegin by the Ghaznavid historian Bayhaqi. To repeat once more, on the one hand, the goal here is to show the use and further development of the image of the simple Turkish general/founder king (and the addition of an ascetical tinge) by Ghaznavid historians. On the other hand, a connection will be established between text and *hors-texte*, between the possibility of self-modeling and self-authorship. Finally, some details might be learned about conversion to Islam in the tenth century, but one in line with the goals of the present study – namely, the imitation of textual and archetypal models.

The text

That Sebüktegin's enslavement and conversion to Islam are related can be surmised with some certainty from a statement of Bayhaqi's. He writes, 'Because God wanted such a great government [the Ghaznavids] to appear on the earth, He raised the Emir Sebüktegin from the rank of infidelity to the rank of belief, and granted him Islam.'[27] So we know that Sebüktegin had been a pagan early on in life, and probably as such he was captured as a war prisoner in Central Asia (narrated in the dream below).

Bayhaqi meticulously cited and dated his source for the reported dream of Sebüktegin – this being a man by the name of Sharif al-Hashimi, a member of the gentry with a great lineage and nobility, and a celebrated poet no less. Bayhaqi wrote that al-Hashimi told him in the year 1058 a story that he in turn had heard from his grandfather, who, along with the army commander

(the ruler of Guzganan in northwest Afghanistan), served as Sebüktegin's envoy to set up a meeting with the Samanid Emir Nuh. As Marilyn Waldman has noted, Bayhaqi's use of this quotation served to give divine sanction and legitimacy to a dynasty that, by the middle of the eleventh century, had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hand of the Seljuks.[28] Yet there is more to Sebüktegin's words here than Bayhaqi might have had in mind when citing it. It reads as follows:

> One day, we alighted at a road station which is called Khakistar.[29] The Emir Sebüktegin held court and distributed much alms to the poor. After the next prayer-time, he mounted his horse. He rode round about those deserts, and all the nobles rode with him. Here and there in those deserts there were elevations and mountains. We saw a piece of mountain. Emir Sebüktegin said, 'I found it!' He urged on his horse and asked five or six servants to get off, and said, 'Dig there!' They got to digging and went down to a little depth. An iron peg appeared which was very large and heavy, like what you find in a stable, and the chain had been separated from it. They drew it out. Emir Sebüktegin saw it, got down from his horse to the ground, praised God almighty, fell prostrate, and wept for a long time. Then he asked for a prayer rug, made two sets of prayers, and then ordered the peg to be taken, and sat back up again. All the grandees said, 'What just happened?' He said, 'It is a rare story. Listen!
>
> 'Before I ended up in Alptegin's house, the master to whom I belonged made me and thirteen companions cross over the Oxus River and brought us to Shuburqan, and from there to Guzganan. At that time, the father of this emir here was the king of Guzganan. They took us to him. He bought seven [sic] men but did not choose me and seven others. Our master then took us toward Nishapur and sold four other slaves in Sarakhs and Marw al-Rud. I remained and two fellows. They used to call me Sebüktegin the long. It happened that three of my master's horses had been hurt under me, and when we reached this Khakistar, a fourth one was hurt too. And my master beat me very much and put the saddle on my neck. I was very sad because of my condition and my life and my bad fortune and the fact that no one would buy me. My master had sworn he would take me to Nishapur walking – and he was doing so.
>
> 'That night I slept with a great sadness, and I dreamed that the prophet Khidr came to me and said, "why are you so sad?" I said, "Because of my bad luck." He said, "Do not be sad, and I will give you good news. You will be a great man with a great name one day, and the next time you pass this desert, you will be with countless subordinates, and you will be their chief. Let your heart be happy, and when you find this road station, do good to God's creatures, and perform justice so that you should live long and government should remain to your offspring."

I said, "Thank you." He said, "Give me your hand and promise." I gave him my hand and promised. He pressed it hard. I awoke, and it was as though I could still feel his grip on my hand. I got up and made full ablutions in the middle of the night, started to pray, and did upwards of fifty sets. I made my supplications and wept a long time. I could feel a greater strength in myself. Then I took this peg here, came out into the desert, and hid it as a token.

'When day broke, my master packed up and looked for the peg. He did not find it. He took his whip and flogged me savagely, and swore a great oath, saying, "I will sell you for whatever price they offer!' And I traveled the distance of two road stations to Nishapur all on foot. Alptegin was in Nishapur as the commander of the army of Khurasan for the Samanids, and he had a great retinue. My master sold me and my two companions to him. The story after that is long, until I reached this rank that you see.'[30]

One may approach this text from two alternative directions; one, that the quotation is authentic and goes back to Sebüktegin, and two, that al-Hashimi or Bayhaqi invented it. Beginning with the first possibility, two details from this quotation lend themselves to a kind of analysis that will lead to our stated conclusions regarding Sebüktegin's conversion. The first is the road taken; the second is the dream about Khidr.

The road

Sebüktegin says that he crossed the Oxus, and then headed westward through the cities of Shuburqan, Guzganan, Sarakhs and finally Marw al-Rudh, to Nishapur – the seat of the commander of the army of Khurasan, where the last of the slaves were sold. This road, which thus covers from east to west the northern tip of today's Afghanistan all the way to northeastern Iran, is attested in the works of Muslim geographers of the tenth century such as Istakhri.[31]

But here lies a crucial piece of information. According to Istakhri, if anyone traveling on this road wished to cross the Oxus River, he would have had to go through two major cities on the shores of the water. These were Tirmidh on the north bank, and Balkh further south.[32] These two cities play a major role in this narrative, and they will be dealt with below. Suffice it to say that from Balkh, the rest of Sebüktegin's path can be rather safely reconstructed to Central Asia – the place of his captivity.

It is fairly well known that the geographers of the tenth century identified the specific frontier towns in Central Asia from which slaves would be sold abroad. Al-Maqdisi, writing circa 985, says that Slavic slaves were exported from Khwarazm, and Turkish slaves from Fergana and Isfijab (in today's eastern Uzbekistan).[33] This is confirmed by Maqdisi's near-contemporary (but anonymous) geographer, who wrote a Persian geographical treatise in the 970s entitled *Hudu al-'Alam* ('Regions of the World'). While the latter author did indeed tell of a few frontier towns of Transoxiana where the inhabitants were warlike ghazis (Bukhara, Osh, Ilaq, Chach),[34] he only mentioned two that can be said to have been a major depot for slaves – namely, Fergana and Isfijab: '[Fergana] is the gateway to Turkestan, and countless Turkish slaves are brought there'[35] and, less explicitly,

> Isfijab is a region in the frontier area between Muslims and caffres. It is a large and prosperous place on the frontiers of Turkestan. Whatever is gotten from Turkestan ends up there. It is the supply-center of all the merchants of the world.[36]

Here, the expression 'whatever is gotten from Turkestan' would presumably include the slaves to whom Maqdisi also referred. From all this, one might infer that Sebüktegin had been captured in a raid (perhaps out of one these towns), brought to either Isfijab or Fergana, and sold into bondage.

According to Istakhri, the roads south-bound from Isfijab and west-bound from Fergana, both heading in the direction of the interior of Khurasan and Transoxiana, converged and then went further west to Samarqand.[37] Therefore, in fact, Sebüktegin's master had two options on his way to Nishapur (the stated destination). Assuming that he had gotten his human cargo in one of the three cities of Isfijab, Fergana or Samarqand, he could continue west to Bukhara and from there southwest to Amol, where 'all the roads of Khurasan to Transoxiana converge', and thence to Nishapur.[38] However, this is not the path he took, since this way he would have arrived at Nishapur *before* Marw al-Rud (in Sebüktegin's narrative, the direction is the reverse). Alternatively (and this is the only viable possibility), they must have gone south from Samarqand to Kish for two days, thence to Tirmidh on the north bank of the Oxus and then Balkh across the river.[39] The road from there to Nishapur has already been established above. But now, their path having been reconstructed, one needs to make something of the reference to the prophet Khidr. Why should he have figured so prominently in the dream?

The prophet Khidr

Khidr figured prominently in the narratives and beliefs of the early ascetics of Central Asia, at least as early as the life of one of the pioneers of this movement – a man by the name of Hakim al-Tirmidhi. Sometime around the year 860, about a century before the occurrence of the events reported above, a young man of twenty-seven made the arduous pilgrimage to Mecca. As he had arrived there too early, he resided in the city until the appropriate month of pilgrimage. Then he felt true repentance in his heart, and resolved to abandon all worldly desires and devote himself to the search for the knowledge of God. This young man's name was Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn

Ali, generally known as the 'sage of Tirmidh' or al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi (d. between 907 and 912).[40]

Tirmidhi later wrote many books, including a brief account of his life. Although Tirmidhi did not formally belong to the nascent proto-Sufi movement of the ninth century, his teachings were certainly mystical. For example, he believed that there existed people who were very close to God and that among these, known as the 'friends of God', there would be an individual who was a kind of spiritual successor to the prophet Muhammad.[41] Tirmidhi thought himself to be this very person, and indeed, as his autobiography shows, he considered his life to be a re-enactment of Muhammad's life (which was portrayed in a number of biographies, such as the famous work of Ibn Hisham).[42] In confirmation of this belief and practice, he narrated a dream of his wherein he shadowed the prophet Muhammad into a mosque and up into the pulpit, sat one step below him, and saw the congregation and the marketplace from the prophet's perspective.[43] Thus he believed that by reading the story of Muhammad's life and imitating it, he would become a kind of deputy to Muhammad.

To help achieve and maintain this elevated position, Tirmidhi and his wife had several other dreams in which various personages guided the sage on his spiritual quest. One of these was 'an old man with white hair and beard who gave off a pleasant odor and had a handsome face'.[44] Also, in fulfillment of this role, the sage undertook acts of public self-humiliation, performing the chores of slaves.[45] Furthermore, even though his behavior and teaching got him in some trouble with the locals at first, towards the end of his life (in the first decade of the tenth century) he had become quite well established in Tirmidh, had many students, and deeply moved audiences by his sermons.[46] Once, he says, some students asked him what the external signs were of the 'friends of God', and the sage answered that, among other things, 'they converse with the prophet Khidr who wanders across the earth'.[47] It is strange that, in spite of this statement and in spite of the fact that Tirmidhi did consider himself a 'friend of God', he did not assert in his autobiography that he ever encountered Khidr. Nor was he remembered by later generations as having held such a meeting. Yet when, a hundred years later, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami (d. 1021) from Nishapur appropriated all the mystics before him in his massive and foundational biography of Sufi masters, he connected Tirmidhi with the one man who was believed to have stumbled upon Khidr in his wanderings. This man was Ibrahim Adham of Balkh.

According to Sulami, Tirmidhi (d. between 907 and 912) had been conversant[48] with a man by the name of Ahmad Khadruyah (864), native of Balkh and a foremost master in all of Khurasan on account of his involvement with chivalrous companies of young men (*futuwwah*).[49] But Ahmad himself had been a student[50] of a senior master by the name of Hatim al-Asamm (d. 852), also a native of Balkh, himself a disciple of Shaqiq al-Balkhi (from Balkh, d. 810),[51] and this latter had studied with Ibrahim Adham (d. 777) – again, also of Balkh.[52]

Indeed, some fascinating stories have come down about the life of Ibrahim Adham. For example, the account of his conversion to mysticism is not unlike the conversion stories of such spiritual heroes as Gautama Buddha. According to Sulami, Ibrahim had narrated it thus:

> My father was one of the kings of Khurasan. I was a young man then, and I used to go hunting on horseback. One day, I rode out on my saddled steed, along with my hound, and I began chasing a hare or a fox. I was hot in pursuit, when suddenly the voice of an invisible caller cried out, 'Ibrahim, was it for this that you were created? Was this what you were commanded to do?' I was startled and stopped for a while. But then I returned to the game and began chasing anew. Yet the same thing happened again, thrice all told. Then the caller spoke out of the pommel of the saddle and said, 'By God, you were not created for this, and this is not what you were commanded to do!'[53]

Thereafter Ibrahim got rid of all his worldly possessions, headed for Mecca, and in the desert on the way he met Khidr, who taught him the names of God.[54] It can be seen that in the ninth and tenth centuries a mystical movement had sprung up in the cities of Tirmidh and Balkh, on the two sides of the Oxus River, in which poverty and humiliation were thought to lead men to God; where glorious white-haired holy men came to the seeker's dream and guided him along the way; where the highest of these seekers would encounter the prophet Khidr; where re-enacting the archetypal biography of a master (for example, Muhammad) would make one a kind of embodiment of that master or his deputy at least; and where, by the later tenth century, many of the practitioners and theoreticians of this movement were being remembered in connection with each other and through hagiographic histories.

Is it possible, then, that Sebüktegin, while being transported to Nishapur, had come under the influence of men in either Tirmidh or Balkh who held such beliefs and converted him? This would make sense of the fact that the story begins on this side of the Oxus, as a sign of a new beginning, where the old life had been left behind forever. This would explain the emir's open admittance to his humiliation, such as being whipped or wearing the saddle on his back. Had not Tirmidhi's biography contained anecdotes of his conspicuously carrying out the difficult chores of slaves? This would also explain the dream of Khidr (who would meet with the initiates). But there remains one crucial element that is absent from Sebüktegin's dream; the re-enactment of the life of a spiritual master (in Tirmidhi's case, one may recall, this had been the imitation of the biography of Muhammad). However, we do possess such narrative, for, in Bayhaqi's history (the source of Sebüktegin's quotation above), a second dream narrative immediately follows the first, reported again by men of noble descent, recalling the words of Emir Sebüktegin. It will be seen how this extraordinary story, told in the first-person by the emir, closes the circle of investigation:

Before I ended up in Ghazna, one day, earlier than the time of the next prayer, I mounted my horse and rode out into the field. This was in Balkh. I only had that one horse, but he was a swift and galloping beast. If ever a game appeared, my horse would not let it get away. I espied a doe, and her fawn was with her. I spurred the horse and truly exerted myself. The fawn became separated from the mother and grew sad. I grabbed her, placed her on the saddle and turned back. The day had passed and neared the time of evening prayer. As I a rode a certain distance, I heard a call. I turned around and looked. It was the child's mother who was following me and was crying and imploring. I spun my horse around hoping to capture her too. I rode forth, but she fled before me as the wind. I turned back again, and the same thing happened two or three times, and the poor thing would follow and moan, until we reached the environs of the city. The mother still followed us, moaning. My heart ached for her, and I thought to myself, 'How much meat will I get from this fawn? I must show mercy to this kindly mother.' I released the child into the field. She ran to her mother, and they both let out a cry and went back out into the field. When I reached home, it had grown dark and there was no hay for my horse. I was very dejected and slept in the room with sadness. I dreamed that an old man, mighty glorious and brilliant (*farahamand*), came to me and said, 'Sebüktegin, know this, that since you showed compassion to that doe and gave her back her little child, leaving your own horse without feed, we have given you and your children the city that is called Ghazna and the country known as Zabulistan. I am the prophet of God – great is his glory, holy are his names, and there is no God but him!'[55]

The relationship between this story and Ibrahim Adham's is unmistakable, and is further reinforced by its setting – the field outside Balkh, Ibrahim's hometown and the center of his cult. The hunt on horseback, the call that prevents the hero committing violence against a weak animal, the meeting of a messenger from the supernatural as a reward – all these echo the legendary tale of the ascetic master of Balkh. On the other hand, there exist divergences between the two accounts. The prey is different in each story (a fawn/doe as opposed to hare/fox), and in Sebüktegin's tale it is the cry of the hunted beast and not the call of an invisible caller that stays the hero's hand from committing the damning violence. But, alas, these divergences can be mitigated by considering an alternative version of Ibrahim Adham's legend, one that occurred in a Persian text completed in 1058. This was the *Uncovering of the Veiled*, another biography of Sufis by Ali b. 'Usman Hujviri (d. circa 1072), native of Ghazna and resident of Lahore. Hujviri's entry reads as follows:

In the beginning, Ibrahim was the emir of Balkh. But, because God almighty wished to make him a king of the universe, Ibrahim rode out to hunt one day. He was separated from his soldiers. He chased after a doe. God, by the miracle of his kindness, made the doe speak to him and say, 'O Ibrahim, was it for this that you were created? Was this what you were commanded to do?'[56]

Surely, the divergences between Sebüktegin's reminiscences and the model hagiography of Ibrahim Adham can be reconciled by Hujviri's version of the legend of the mystic of Balkh. Yet our investigation has led us into a maze of possibilities. Perhaps Hujviri's alternative account of Ibrahim Adham's life was as old as Sulami's, and it was this second version that Sebüktegin had heard and decided to imitate. Hujviri certainly knew Sulami's work,[57] and the fact that he altered the story is significant. I think this first possibility is the most likely.

On the other hand, perhaps Hujviri's report reflected a later development of the legend, and the Sebüktegin passage, although originally in conformity with Sulami's version of the legend, had been modified by others throughout the eleventh century to match the changing hagiography of Ibrahim Adham – after whom, everybody knew, the old emir had been modeled. This possibility is, however, unlikely, as it almost presupposes a conspiracy among authors from different socio-economic backgrounds (Sufis and Ghaznavid secretaries) to support court narratives.

Finally, perhaps the direct quotations of Sebüktegin were all invented by others and reflect not how the emir wanted to present himself, but how the elites of Khurasan and Ghazna presented him. This is probably the most unlikely case, as the two passages clearly do more than merely criticize or legitimize. In any of these cases, we have learned much. We know, for example how self-fashioning and conversion might have taken place in the tenth century. We certainly can tell what sorts of models were available for self-fashioning – namely, the re-enactment of one's life after the biography of another well-known historical figure.

In charting the rise of the image of the noble, austere founder king (a Turk), one can see in the quotations of Sebüktegin how a clear ascetic tinge was added to the collection of topoi already used for such men such as Bugha the Great. Recalling the depiction of Bugha by Mas'udi, one may reaffirm the similarity between the two 'Turkish generals'. In both cases, the strange behavior by the general (Bugha's not wearing armor to battle, Sebüktegin's crying at the site of a peg) leads to the explanation which reaches a climax in the dream narrative, including divine promise of longevity (of life to Bugha, and dynastic rule to Sebüktegin). Then there is an insertion by the author, followed by the second narrative in which the reason for this divine favor is given. Bugha almost kills an innocent man out of murder-lust, but the voice of the victim brings him back to himself, and he saves the man at his own peril. Therefore God rewards him. Sebüktegin almost kills a helpless fawn, the voice of the mother awakens his conscience, he frees the animal at his own expense, and God rewards him.

How this image was used to justify the fall of the Ghaznavids

Before proceeding to see how the making of the 'founder king' was completed by the addition of ghaza, it is important to pause here and show how Bayhaqi, after having employed and further developed the image of the founder Sebüktegin, used his archetypal attributes to explain the fall of his grandson Mas'ud to the nomadic upstarts – i.e., the Seljuk Turcoman. By doing this, Bayhaqi laid the foundation for making the triad of model kings that represented the three stages of the rise and fall of states. This means that by describing the Seljuks as austere founder types, and the Ghaznavid king Mas'ud as the corrupt and debauched third ruler, Bayhaqi had endowed the history of dynasties with a cyclical pattern of rise and fall which would be then replaced by a new but identical cycle. As would be expected, the encounter between the two would be described very much based on the pre-existing rhetorical models. Mas'ud would resemble men such as Mutawakkil (in Mas'udi) or Tawq (in Tabari), while the Seljuks would recall Ya'qub or indeed Sebüktegin.

Just like his prototypes, Mas'ud was portrayed as negligent, constantly in a drugged or drunken stupor, and weighed down by unnecessary worldly possession, while the Seljuks were depicted as austere, alert and unencumbered. Moreover, these attributes assumed a causal function, bringing about the downfall of one and the victory of the other, respectively. Bayhaqi the author, as well as several characters in his history, constantly bewail the misery that befell them as a result of Mas'ud's crapulence. As the sultan's vizier is quoted saying,

> The situation of the enemy has reached such magnitude that no commander is able to control it. They have defeated two great generals with numerous soldiers, and they have come to a great deal of money. All this has emboldened them. Only the presence of his majesty will set things back on the right track. Really, his majesty needs to change his ways, abandon pleasure and entertainment, call his military to arm, delegate responsibility to no one else, and quit his penny-pinching.[58]

Just as with Tawq in Tabari, the sultan is busy wasting money and drinking, while his enemy – the Turcoman Seljuks – is growing more dangerous everyday. Yet, even after Mas'ud decides to confront his adversaries head on, he cannot resist the temptation for debauchery:

> After prayer, the emir sat at the table and the great men of state, several friends, and other high-ranking people were brought forth and were seated. The poets began reciting in manner unparalleled theretofore on *'ayd-i fitr* [a feast day]. Minstrels followed them with song and music. Wine began to flow and all returned dead drunk. Mas'ud got up from the table after downing seven goblets of wine. He went to the hall and the others were sent home. After this, he drank wine continuously for an entire week, mostly with his boon companions. He gave fifty thousand dirhams to the minstrels, saying, 'Do your best, for we will leave soon, and there will be no drinking in Khurasan so that the enemy wouldn't start to get ideas [that I am negligent]'.[59]

This is a suggestive passage not only for reiterating the dissolute behavior of the ruler, but also for demonstrating Mas'ud's own awareness of his flaw. Here, the sultan is trying to binge on alcohol for he knows that once he enters Khurasan, where the Seljuks have gained dominance, he must put aside the bottle and concentrate on fighting. Of course, as the narrative progresses, Mas'ud is shown to be unable to overcome his addiction, and even when he ceases his drinking he merely substitutes it with smoking opium. And this, predictably, has further devastating results on his ability to fight the Turcoman:

> When [the Seljuk leader] Tughrul heard that the emir [Mas'ud] had gone towards Tus, he realized that they were going to block his path. Immediately, he set out for Awn[?]. But then, a strange occurrence took place. It was as though Tughrul was not fated to be captured. The sultan had taken a bit of opium and had not slept well. When night fell, he slipped into a slumber while riding on his elephant. The elephant drivers, realizing this, did not dare to drive the beast at full gallop, and so they trotted along at a jolly pace. The sultan remained asleep till dawn and lost his chance [to capture Tughrul. When he realized what had happened] Mas'ud came down from the elephant, utterly furious for wasting this opportunity. He kept screaming at himself and others, cursing savagely. I had never seen him so enraged.[60]

The similarity between Mas'ud and his prototypes in older historiographical rhetoric is unmistakable. Drowned in a stupor of wine and opium, he loses his flexibility and alertness vis-à-vis his foes. The Seljuk leader, on the other hand, is quick to appreciate the situation, and acts accordingly. His promptness, combined with Mas'ud's narcotic coma, gives him the advantage.

Thus, perhaps the most fundamental distinction between the Seljuks on the one hand and the Ghaznavids on the other (according to Bayhaqi, of course) is the overall greed and worldliness of one and the utter austerity and nimbleness of the other. The following descriptions of each side during the final weeks around the time of the decisive Battle of Dandaniqan speak to this point.

Davud the Seljuk leader is quoted as saying:

> I have seen their army when I fought them at Aliabad. They have all the men and weapons you'd want, but their baggage is heavy, and they are not able to separate themselves from it or live without it. They won't be able to decide weather to protect themselves or their baggage. But we are free and unencumbered.[61]

Or, later on: 'We are men of the desert and can bear hardship. We can stand the heat and the cold, but Mas'ud and his army cannot'.[62] Or, as one Ghaznavid leader puts it, 'Our soldiers are tired but so are Turcoman. Yet, they can put up with more than we can, and they are desperate and are fighting for dear life'.[63]

The difference between the two sides is therefore one of outlook and lifestyle, not military capability. This was certainly the operative explanation in earlier narratives in Tabari and Mas'udi as well. The similarity between Bayhaqi and his predecessors, however, goes beyond thematic similarity, and even includes a number of verbal echoes as well. The following contrast made between Mas'ud and the Seljuk leader Tughrul is a good example. The passage recalls the section in Tabari in which Ya'qub the coppersmith had chided his opponent Tawq. Ya'qub's words read thus: 'I have not taken these boots off for two months, and the bread I eat is in them. Nor have I slept in a bed. You on the other hand, you sit and drink and party. Is this how you wanted to do battle against me?' Bayhaqi's contrast between Mas'ud and Tughrul runs as follows:

> Tughrul had not taken off his armor and shoes for several days, and when he slept he had used his shield as pillow ... The emir [Mas'ud] camped at Nisa for a few days and drank wine for it was a pleasant spot.[64]

The similarity between the two descriptions (short of being a direct borrowing) suggests that the former has already become a formula for the latter to draw upon.

Bayhaqi himself, though, summed up these ideas succinctly in a poem he had quoted from a contemporary of his:

> What should a king know of eating and sleeping? It is school children who know about such things. If a king is wakeful in his management of affairs, he would take his enemy from the garden to the jail house, all shackled. If a king wears fur and fancy clothes, the armor will feel heavy on him.[65]

Thus, by the end of the eleventh century, the figure of the founder king had been fully developed, though later additions would be made. He was a

Turk, simple, austere, unencumbered by the weight of debilitating luxury, and was associated with asceticism. More often than not, this founder had replaced the decadent final king of another dynasty. By the end of the century, in the hands of the famous Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk, the founder king was endowed with the final attribute of ghaza. Specifically, Nizam al-Mulk used Mahmud to personify the idealized ruler who stood for stability, justice, and support for religious institution. Sebüktegin, in the hands of the author of the *Siyasat'namah*, became associated with ghaza. This final addition will be analyzed in the next chapter.

5 The triad of kings

In the previous chapter, the argument was made that while Mahmud and some of his courtiers characterized the Ghaznavid sultan as the ideal ghazi king, other men of letters simultaneously invented the image of the 'founder king' out of the memory of Mahmud's father Sebüktegin, possibly drawing on the old emir's self-presentation. The latter was (unlike his son) a simple and austere Turk, and embodied the ideals of asceticism. Sebüktegin's memory was moreover used to explain the fall of his grandson (the debauched and autocratic Mas'ud) to the Seljuk Turks, who were portrayed as very similar to Sebüktegin. In other words, particularly in the hands of Bayhaqi (d. 1077–78), the history of the Ghaznavids assumed a cyclical pattern of rise, climax and fall (as embodied by Sebüktegin, Mahmud and Mas'ud, respectively), which was in turn replaced by a new cycle (that of the Seljuks).

In this chapter, the full elaboration and later diffusion of the pattern will be mapped out. First, it will be argued that in the Islamic East, eleventh-century authors from the secretarial class, but especially the famous Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092), expanded upon the cyclical pattern of history implicit in Bayhaqi. Nizam al-Mulk's significant contribution to this pattern was the transfer of ghaza to the 'founder king' model, removing holy war from the climactic reign of the ideal monarch (Mahmud). Second, it will be shown how during the Mongol period, in a biography of a Muslim prince by the name of Jalal al-Din Minkubirni (d. 1230) (from Khwarazm in today's Uzbekistan), a last attribute was added to the founder king: that of the refugee and wanderer. Third, the chapter will close by providing an example of how the 'triad of kings' cycle could be employed over and over again by Muslim chroniclers to plot the history of a particular dynasty. The evidence for this last section will be found in a history of the Seljuks of Rūm by Ibn Bibi.

Nizam al-Mulk, ghaza, and the triad of kings

Throughout the second half of the eleventh century, writers and statesmen from three neighboring kingdoms that dominated the Islamic East (the Qarakhanids in Transoxiana, the Ghaznavids in Afghanistan and Hindustan,

and the Seljuks in Iran and Mesopotamia) were beginning to see the duty of the ideal king not as performing ghaza, but as enforcing social order and ensuring prosperity. One such man of the pen, the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk, drew on the same cyclical pattern implicit in his contemporary Bayhaqi's history and relegated ghaza to the early days of an idealized dynasty (the Ghaznavids), before their government had reached full maturity in their political lifecycle. Much like other secretaries in the region, Nizam al-Mulk preferred lesser commanders – not the king himself – to undertake the role of ghazi of the frontier. Mahmud, bereft of ghaza, was reborn simply as the majestic king of the 'climax stage', the law-and-order monarch. This first section will argue this point, beginning with the loss of interest in royal ghaza by authors in the Qarakhanid, Ghaznavid and Seljuk kingdoms.

By 1055, the Qarakhanid territories in Central Asia split up among rival princes of the dynasty, and at the end of the century those who governed Transoxiana minted coins as vassals of the Seljuks.[1] Those who ruled further east, seated in Kashghar (in the modern province of Xinjiang in western China), had a freer hand. It was near the end of this period that the two earliest surviving literary works of the Qarakhanid period were composed.

A particularly relevant volume of this literary duo is one entitled *Kutadgu Bilig* (wisdom of royal glory), a kind of mirror for princes, the oldest such book in a Turkic language. It was composed in 1069 by Yusuf Khass Hajib, chamberlain of Ibrahim Tamghach Khan. Yusuf made only an indifferent reference to ghaza in this text. While he enjoined the ruler to fight caffres without fearing death, to spread the rule of Islam, to break idols and to capture property,[2] he nevertheless did not refer to these activities as ghaza. Where he did use the word was in justification of the need for material wealth. He suggested that money is useful for funding the pilgrimage to Mecca or supporting ghazi activity (*ghazilik*).[3]

In a poem of over 6,500 lines, these few references are terribly meager. Yusuf seems to have been much more concerned about the implementation of just rule. Indeed, it appears that even his bidding for battling caffres served as a means of avoiding internal strife. 'Do not march against another Muslim', he entreated, 'Muslims are brothers to one another. Do not quarrel with your brother'[4] and, more to the point, 'Now, Muslims have grown quarrelsome, and they devour each other's flesh while the caffres repose in peace and tranquility. The property of Muslims has become open plunder'.[5] At least for Yusuf Khass Hajib in the Qarakhanid court, curbing internal disorder was seen as more urgent and appropriate for a ruler than ghazi activity.

The Ghaznavid case was a bit more extreme. Here, the historian Bayhaqi considered ghaza to be a dangerous distraction for the reigning monarch Mas'ud (r. 1030–1041). With the advantage of hindsight, Bayhaqi even had a Ghaznavid vizier prophecy that the sultan's untimely ghaza in India would lead to his eventual downfall at the hands of the Seljuks. The vizier warns:

> your majesty, if you do not go to Khurasan, and the Turcoman should occupy a region, or not even a region but a little village, and should they do as is their habit, killing, burning, and mutilating, then ten ghazas in Hansi [India] will not measure up to it. Our campaign in Amol [in the Caspian region] has led to this disaster, and this invasion of India will be even worse.[6]

It is indeed significant that whereas during the reign of Mahmud ghaza was considered a tool of royal legitimacy, in the later years of the dynasty, Ghaznavid secretaries and officials considered it a catastrophic distraction: 'The emir regretted his going to India, but it was too late'.[7] It is clear that, just like Yusuf Khass Hajib at the Qarakhanid court, the historian Bayhaqi serving the later Ghaznavids was also more concerned with the maintenance of the internal order and integrity of the empire, and did not care for royal engagement in ghaza. The task was to be given to a lesser military commander called the 'commander of ghazis' (*salār-i ghāziyān*).

Perhaps the most systematic expression of these ideas (namely, that the king should not engage in ghaza but rather administer justice and prosperity) occurs in the writing of the Seljuk vizier Nizam al-Mulk. Nizam al-Mulk emphasized the 'triad of kings' pattern implicit in Bayhaqi and relegated ghaza to the 'early stage' (embodied by Sebüktegin), removing it from the climax stage (as embodied by Mahmud). For the rest of this section, it will be argued that Nizam al-Mulk accomplished all this by arranging and rearranging episodes from Ghaznavid history in order to reinforce these first two stages (rise and climax).

As is well known, Nizam al-Mulk was born in the city of Tus in Khurasan sometime between 1018 and 1020. His father had been a minor official for the Ghaznavids, and had fled Khurasan and gone to Ghazna after the Battle of Dandaniqan. But Nizam al-Mulk returned to Khurasan soon thereafter and began working in the service of Chaghrı Beg and then his son Alp Arsalan. It was under the latter, and the latter's son Malik Shah, that Nizam al-Mulk became the most famous administrator of his age. Near the end of his career, the vizier wrote his celebrated *Siyasat'namah*, or book of politics, a mirror for princes that drew on historical anecdotes (especially those of the Ghaznavids) in order to illustrate important issues relating to Seljuk rule. Among these was the transfer of ghazi duties to the underlings of the sultan.

Particularly relevant for this study is the anecdote about the commander of the Samanid army of Khurasan, a man known as Alptegin, his undeserved fall from favor, his refusal to rebel, and his migration to the frontier regions of India to do ghaza and build a kingdom there. Now, in this long section, Nizam al-Mulk was in fact recounting the life story of one of Alpetgin's slaves and his trusted general. This, of course, was none other than the Emir Sebüktegin. As we shall see, Nizam al-Mulk was fully aware that by describing the early ghazi activities of the founder king he was also endowing the formative stages of a dynasty, in the tripartite cycle of dynasties, with ghaza.

This story is related under section 27 of the *Siyasat'namah* and, as its title implies, the narrative advised Malik Shah 'not to molest underlings while they serve'.[8] The main point of the story was:

> To know who is a good underling (*bandah*, also 'slave'), and not to molest an underling who has done worthy service, and has never committed treason or broken an oath ... Alptegin was a good underling, and the rule of the Samanids depended on him. But they did not appreciate his value and made an attempt on his life. As he left Khurasan, with him the fortune of rulership also departed from the Samanid house.[9]

The first line makes it clear that Nizam al-Mulk had used the story of Alptegin in order to drive home a point about a contemporary Seljuk problem. The story is somewhat symbolic. The Samanids here stand for the Seljuks, and Alptegin stands for some underling under the Seljuks. The social context involves the issues of loyalty derived from patronage and the mutual relationships between partners in such an association (in this case, the king and his slave or underling).[10] Who was this wronged subordinate? The previous section, numbered 26, clarifies this correspondence. Section 26 is only one paragraph long, and is entitled 'On how to keep the Turcoman in service'. The entirety of section 27 is in fact a long commentary on the points made in section 26. These few lines show that Nizam al-Mulk had in mind the problem of the Turcoman as he wrote the tale of Alptegin:

> Even though the Turcoman have committed censorious acts, and even though they are a numerous host, nevertheless, the government has obligations towards them, since they had performed services in the early years of this government and have suffered for it. Moreover they are [the sultan's] kinsfolk.[11]

It is on the heels of these lines that Nizam al-Mulk attached the narrative of the disgruntled Alptegin. But there are also elements in this tale that one might call 'wishful thinking'. If the anecdote about Alptegin is somehow relevant to the Turcoman under the Seljuks, it is significant that in Nizam al-Mulk's story the old loyal commander refuses to rebel even after being mistreated by the monarch. Nizam al-Mulk attributes the following speech to Alptegin:

> I can easily seize kingship from him [the young king] and give it to his uncle, or even take it for myself. But I fear lest the world should say, 'For sixty years did Alptegin maintain the Samanids who were his lords, but finally when he turned eighty, he rebelled against the sons of his lords, took kingship away from them by the sword, and sat in their place. He became an ingrate caffre toward their beneficence.'[12]

Again, following Mottahedeh and Paul, the main issue here is one of loyalty and patronage. Alptegin feels bound to the patronage he had received from certain individuals of the Samanid dynasty, and as a result feels tied to other members of the same dynasty in spite of the mistreatment he has received at their hands. In the appanage system that marked Seljuk politics, where uncles and cousins vied for influence over various Turcoman factions, these lines imply that Nizam al-Mulk wished the figure of Alptegin to serve as a model of restraint for other members of the Seljuk family, no matter how ancient their claim or how just their complaint might have been against the ruling monarch. What he offered instead, as an alternative to rebellion, was ghaza in the frontiers. Nizam al-Mulk sets up a scene in which the soldiers of Alptegin encourage him to lead a mutiny to Bukhara, but he refuses:

> Alptegin said, 'You are all soldiers of the king, and I had been commanding you on his behalf. Now get up and go to court, see the king, renew your diplomas, and remain in his service. I will go to India and will keep busy with jihad and ghaza. If I die, I will be a martyr, but if I find success for the glory of Islam, I will annex the land of caffres to the land of Islam' ... No one believed that Alptegin would leave Khurasan and go to India, because he owned over five hundred villages in Khurasan and Transoxiana. Nor was there a single town in which he did not own palaces, gardens, caravanserais, and baths. He had over a million head of sheep and a hundred thousand horses, cattle, and camels. But when day broke, they heard the blow of the trumpets, and Alptegin began his exile (*kūch*) along with his personal slaves and attendants and left all this wealth (*ni'mat*) behind.[13]

If these lines are read in the historical context in which they were written by Nizam al-Mulk, and if one considers how the author used historical anecdotes in order to clarify contemporary issues,[14] it is possible that this section makes reference to the moving of the Turcoman into a frontier region (perhaps Anatolia, won by the Seljuks after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071). Nizam al-Mulk advised his king not to antagonize his Turcoman kinfolk, but he also wished the wronged Turcoman to choose ghaza in the frontier over rebellion at home.

More relevant to the argument in this section, Nizam al-Mulk had endowed the early stages of the idealized Ghaznavid dynasty, as embodied by the simple Turk (Alptegin and Sebüktegin), with the attribute of ghaza. The tale of Alptegin's disgrace and fall and his journey to India was also the narrative of the rise of the Ghaznavids. Nizam al-Mulk related how the slave Sebüktegin had been bought by Alptegin's men, how he had proved his worth by a number of commendable deeds, how indeed he had helped Alptegin beat back a Samanid army that had been sent after him, and finally how he succeeded Alptegin after the latter's death. In other words, Nizam al-Mulk's Sebüktegin possessed all the characteristics already present in Bayhaqi, but was now also spiced up with ghaza.

Nizam al-Mulk was fully aware of this schematization of rise and fall of dynasties as embodied by individual kings. This is so because, both in the aforementioned section as well in the rest of the book, Nizam al-Mulk altered diverse historical narratives in order to reinforce the tripartite model. To be exact, Nizam al-Mulk took anecdotes about the third Ghaznavid emir, Mas'ud, which related the monarch's sense of military justice and retold them about Alptegin and Sebüktegin's frontier days. He moreover altered stories that signified Mas'ud's able governance and repackaged them as episodes from Mahmud's reigns. Narratives signifying Mas'ud's ineptitude and corruption he retained intact.

To illustrate, there is a scene in Bayhaqi's *History*, describing Emir Mas'ud's ill-starred campaign in the Caspian region to which the author himself was an eyewitness. In this incident, Bayhaqi narrates how the emir punished a soldier of his (a ghulam) for oppressing the local population of the region. It is difficult to see how this story reached Nizam al-Mulk, but the sense of brutal military justice contained in this episode must have fitted well with his conception of the earlier phase of dynastic rise. It appears that either Nizam al-Mulk repeated the tale but changed the main actor from Mas'ud to Alptegin, or he chose the version that had featured Alptegin instead of Mas'ud and served his purposes better. This is how Bayqai's version reads:

> On Sunday February 8 [1035], the emir reached Gurgan, passing Turbat-i Qabus [in today's northern Iran] on the way, camping next to a huge river on the side of the town known as Muhammad'abad [in today's Iran]. Now, while he was crossing from one side of town to the other, a ghulam of his stole a sheep. Soon, a petitioner arrived at the camp and complained. The emir stopped his horse and said to the sergeants, 'I want you to bring me this ghulam boy right away.' They rode off and brought him in along with the sheep. It turned out he was on a stipend. The emir said to him, 'Have you been paid your stipend?' He answered that he had and stated how much it was. The emir retorted, 'Then why did you take this sheep from the residents of one of my provinces? If you needed meat, why didn't you pay for it with silver, seeing that you have received your wages?' He said, 'I was wrong. I am guilty.' But the emir replied, 'You will meet the punishment of the guilty.' He had him be hanged by the gate of Gurgan, and had his horse and equipment turned over to the owner of the sheep. He also had it be proclaimed that whoever oppresses the subjects of this region will meet the same punishment. Therefore a great awe and respect was established.[15]

This is how Bayhaqi describes the action of Emir Mas'ud as he had witnessed it. A very similar story can be found in Nizam al-Mulk's

Siyasat'namah, but the characters are different. In Nizam al-Mulk, it is Alptegin in the frontiers of India, and not Mas'ud, who enforces the brutal military justice of the ghazis. It reads thus:

> [After trekking from town to town in Afghanistan, and finally arriving at Ghazna and conquering it], one day, Alptegin saw one of his slaves marching along, having hung a bag of hay and a fowl from his saddle-strap. He told his men to bring the slave to him. They brought him in. Alptegin asked, 'Where did you get this bag of hay and this fowl?' He answered, 'I took it from a villager'. 'Do you receive your monthly stipend and allowance?' he asked him. The slave replied in the affirmative. Then Alptegin said, 'Then why didn't you pay for it with gold? The reason I pay you a stipend and an allowance is so that you don't confiscate the property of poor people. Plus, I have been making all these proclamations against it.' Immediately, he ordered the slave to be cut in two and had him be hung along with the bag of hay at the very spot. He had it be proclaimed for three days that 'Whoever takes anything by force and I get word of it, I'll do to him exactly as I have done with this personal slave of mine.' The soldiers were all frightened and the people were made safe.[16]

The basic features of the two tales are the same. The king and his army are in an occupied territory. A slave is caught in the act of stealing the livelihood of local peasants in spite of receiving his salary. His body is hung publicly to serve as an example to others. It is not necessary to prove that it was Nizam al-Mulk and not Bayhaqi who changed the story (even though Bayhaqi does follow this very episode by a different anecdote from Sebüktegin's time, and even though he would have a harder time fabricating episodes of Sebüktegin's reign for an audience in Ghazna). The point is that Nizam al-Mulk's choice reinforces the 'triad of kings' cyclical pattern of dynastic rule, making the 'founder king' stage equivalent with the rough justice of the frontier, and also adding ghaza to this phase.

This authorial practice of the Seljuk vizier is by no means an isolated incident. For there occur other stories that emphasize the need for proper maintenance of the kingdom, in which the hero is Emir Mas'ud in another contemporary text but Mahmud in the *Siyasat'namah*. The text in question is the *Qabus'namah*, a mirror for princes written by a petty ruler of the Caspian region who was also a son-in-law of Mas'ud and had spent some time in Ghazna. A comparison of the two otherwise similar accounts shows that Nizam al-Mulk's version contributes to the tripartite cycle of dynastic rise, climax and fall, while that of the *Qabus'namah* does not. The latter version reads as follows:

> One day a wronged woman arrived from the frontier post (*ribāṭ*) of Faravah (?) and complained about the sultan's agent there. Sultan Mas'ud ordered a letter to be drafted for her. She took it and headed back but the agent did not heed it. He thought to himself, 'This woman will never get back to Ghazna to seek justice.' But she did go back, went to court, and sought justice. Sultan Mas'ud ordered another letter for her. The old woman said, 'I already took a letter and it did not work'. The sultan replied, 'And I already gave a letter, what can I do if it didn't work?' The old woman said, 'My lord there is an easy solution. Run your country in such a way that people would carry out your decrees.'[17]

The point of this anecdote is clear enough. A helpless subject (and old woman) from a peripheral area is wronged. She takes her case to the sultan, who is at first negligent, but she shames him into action and the sultan then redresses her suit. Nizam al-Mulk has a somewhat similar account, but here it is Mahmud (who represents the great administrator of justice in Nizam al-Mulk's scheme), not his son, who establishes proper order. It runs as follows:

> In the days when Sultan Mahmud seized the country of Iraq, bandits robbed a woman along with her caravan at a frontier post (*ribāṭ*) called Dayr-i Gachi [?]. The bandits belonged to the Kuch and Baluch,[18] and this Kuch and Baluch is attached to the country of Kirman [southeast of today's Iran]. The woman went to Sultan Mahmud and made complaint saying, 'bandits robbed my property at Dayr-i Gachi. Recover my property from them or give me the equivalent amount.' Mahmud asked, 'Where is Dayr-i Gachi?' She answered, 'Why don't you conquer only as much land as you can keep track of, look after its justice, and protect it?'[19]

The moral of this story is similar to the one quoted above. The feeble old woman shames the sultan into performing his obligation as the administrator of justice. What is significant, however, is that in Nizam al-Mulk such stories are arranged consistently in such a way to reinforce certain stages in the blueprint of the 'triad of kings' as embodied by Ghaznavid monarchs – namely, the brutal but noble frontier princes who do ghaza followed by the auspicious king who dispenses justice and brings about prosperity. As is well known, the greater part of the *Siyasat'namah* focused on developing the image of this just monarch, and in this Nizam al-Mulk used Mahmud of Ghazna as one of his primary models.

Thus, by the end of the eleventh century, in the Ghaznavid, Seljuk and Qarakhanid domains, the memory of the ghazi king merged with the founder king. The simple ascetic Turkic commander, the founder of the dynasty, was depicted as the performer of ghaza, while the grandiose and just ruler (as embodied by Mahmud) stood for order and prosperity. At least in Bayhaqi's scheme (flushed out at the end of the previous chapter), the third, the decadent and debauched ruler, would lose his kingdom to a new

set of austere Turks, and thereafter the cycle would be renewed. Once the basic pattern had been established, writers of succeeding generations (in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) began to exploit it for composing their own histories, but again making their own contributions to it. In particular, following the Mongol invasions, historians revived or reformulated ghaza as resistance to the Mongols, and in depicting their favorite rulers as the ideal ghazis they drew on the Ghaznavid/Seljuk models that had been formed by the end of the eleventh century. Below, two such instances will be examined. In the first, it will be argued that a Muslim prince of Central Asia was portrayed by his biographers as a wandering ghazi, in a language derived from a Ghaznavid text (namely 'Utbi's *Yamini*). In the second instance, the case will be made that a late historian of the Seljuks of Rūm used the tripartite model to explain the climax and fall of the dynasty in the thirteenth century.

Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah and 'Utbi's *Yamini*

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, one of the most prominent powers in the eastern parts of Islamdom was that of the Khwarazmshahs. In the year 1200, the Khwarazmian Sultan Tekish had been followed by 'Ala al-Din Muhammad who, by 1219, had managed to capture most of the Iranian plateau from the Seljuks and the area of today's Afghanistan from the Ghurids, while maintaining control in Transoxiana. Almost simultaneously the Mongols had begun their westward move, and had captured the territory of the Kara Khitay by 1218. The Mongols invaded Transoxiana in 1219. 'Ala al-Din Muhhammad fled to an island on the Caspian Sea and died.

One of the sons of the Khwarazmshah, a young prince by the name of Jalal al-Din Minkubirni, fled to the interior of the Iranian plateau and managed to attract to himself an entourage of Khwarazmians and Khurasanis. Among these was a man of letters, son of a minor grandee in Khurasan, who joined Jalal al-Din to compose his correspondence (*kitābat al-inshā'*).[20] About two decades after, in the early 1240s, this man, Shihab al-Din Nasawi, composed a history in Arabic about the life and resistance of his master, who by then had fallen to the Mongols. Yet this was no mere history book. Nasawi took as his literary model for the biography 'Utbi's history of Mahmud of Ghazna – the *Yamini*. But Mahmud in the *Yamini* was the ghazi par excellence, and whether Nasawi intended this or not, his contemporary audience began to see Jalal al-Din as a ghazi king also. Nasawi's depiction in turn reinforced the idea of the ghazi not as a majestic ruler such as Mahmud, but as a wanderer like his father Sebüktegin.

The parallels between Nasawi's text and 'Utbi's were both structural and phrasal. Nasawi began his history with two independently evolving accounts – one of the 'Tatars' and another of his master's father 'Ala al-Din Muhhammad – before coming to his main subject, which was the biography of Jalal al-Din. Likewise 'Utbi had begun his *Yamini* with the events of the Samanids and Sebüktegin (Mahmud's father) before his description of Mahmud's reign.

However, Nasawi's affinity with 'Utbi is more intimate than that. His text is interspersed with verbatim echoes of the *Yamini*. Right from the start, Nasawi warned his readers that they will find 'in the descriptions of how his [the sultan's] fortune fluctuated, strange wonders, the likes of which cannot be found except in the legends of the ancients which aim at exaggeration, frightening, mystification, and provoking astonishment'.[21] This very sentence is a word-for-word composite of two phrases out of 'Utbi's introduction.[22]

Further down, when writing of a Mongol villain who received an arrow in his chest (*ṣadr*), Nasawi's memory immediately recalled a scene in 'Utbi where a pagan Indian king received a stab wound in his chest (*ṣadr*; the key word that triggered the remembrance) and suddenly began quoting 'Utbi verbatim, including the Koranic phrase[23] that the Ghaznavid author had cited in support of his statement. 'He was,' so runs the sentence, 'transferred unto "the fire of God, kindled, which leaps up to the hearts of men" '.[24]

In another place, Nasawi again reproduced both 'Utbi and a quotation cited by him, but he managed to remember 'Utbi's words more accurately than the more famous adage cited by 'Utbi. He wrote, in response to some misbehavior by a mass of people, 'It is to this very kind of thing that the saying of the Caliph 'Umar refers, "what God restrains by means of the sultan is greater than what he restrains by means of the Koran" '.[25] This sentence, along with 'Umar's words, is straight out of the introduction of the *Yamini*, except 'Utbi reproduces 'Umar's saying thus: 'what the sultan restrains is greater than what the Koran restrains'.[26]

Once more, when writing about the bad intention of one of the characters in his history, Nasawi fell back on an image in the *Yamini*, used to portray the evil design of a pagan Indian king. 'The devil had laid eggs in his head, and they were hatching; he had heated up the black bile in his head, and it was boiling.' This sentence diverges from 'Utbi's by one word only. Instead of Nasawi's second 'head' (*ra's*), 'Utbi had used 'brain' (*damāgh*).[27]

Finally, although other such examples abound, when Nasawi wrote of the violent encounter between the Atabeg Sa'd b. Zangi and his rebellious son, his language began to merge with 'Utbi's description of a similar exchange between the Emir Sebüktegin and a subservient ruler. Nasawi: 'The naked sword was in his hand, and he struck the face of his son with a sword-strike.... But the confused muddle of the two parties separated them.'[28] 'Utbi: 'He unsheathed his sword, and struck the hand of the Emir with a sword-strike.... But the confused muddle of the two parties separated one from the other.'[29] We can see how the image of the naked sword had reminded Nasawi of the unsheathed sword in 'Utbi. From there 'Utbi's words began to echo in his brain ('he struck ... with a sword-strike'), and then gradually, by the end of the sentence, it was no longer Nasawi but 'Utbi who was speaking.

Of course, all these parallelisms are not particularly crucial to the story, and do not even figure in making Jalal al-Din resemble Mahmud. Instead, 'Utbi's text seems to have been more of a formal model for writing the biography. This is no great surprise. Nasawi makes it clear that studying 'Utbi was required for the educated men of his day. He writes, for instance, that one of his patrons

> was a sorcerer in generosity, and an ocean of liberality. He had memorized the books *Siqt al-Zand* of Ma'ari, the *Yamini* of 'Utbi, the *Mulakhkhass* of Razi, and the *Isharat* of Ibn Sina. He has a collection of Persian and Arabic poems.[30]

It is quite likely that Nasawi's education was similar to Nusrat al-Din's, and the random verbal echoes of the *Yamini* in his text testify to his having memorized the *Yamini* at some point during his schooling.

In any event, the connection between the *Yamini* and the *Life of Jalal al-Din* was not lost to contemporary audiences. They could easily recognize the implicit association of Nasawi/Jalal al-Din with 'Utbi/Mahmud, and by the end of the century the reputation of the Khwarazmshah was solidified as a ghazi king. We can certainly see this, for example, in the Persian rendering of Nasawi's book, made circa 1280,[31] where the anonymous translator concluded his labor with the following words: 'Thank God that my life lasted long enough to let me finish this translation, and the history and the ghazas of that world-conquering king [Jalal al-Din] ... was completed.'[32] Whatever Nasawi had intended by basing his biography of the Khwarazmshah on the history of Mahmud, his audience by the end of the thirteenth century saw Jalal al-Din as a champion of ghaza. And yet, this ghazi was not as Mahmud in the *Yamini*. Rather he resembled in some ways the idea of what a ghazi king should be like (a wandering commander, uprooted, etc.) – i.e., much closer to the image of the ghazi king as formulated by eleventh-century writers such as Nizam al-Mulk.

When the Mongols came for the Khwarazmshah, he was left unaided and was beaten. He died in 1230. His legacy, however, proved crucial to the history of the concept of ghaza. For he had embodied the wandering prince turned ghazi king, thus finalizing the evolving image of the 'founder king' recast as ghazi. In the third and final section of this chapter, it will be shown how the fully-formed pattern of the 'triad of kings' was employed by chronicler Ibn Bibi in retelling the history of the Seljuks of Rūm.

Ghaza in Mongol Anatolia

Ibn Bibi was a son of Khwarazmian refugees, and the seal-holder (in charge of correspondence) of the Seljuks (*amīr-i dīvān-i Ī'ughrā*) during the final decades of the thirteenth century (he was still alive in the 1280s when his book was abridged by an anonymous hand). He witnessed the

gradual loss of the independence of the sultans of Rūm to the Mongols. His parents were both among the Khwarazmian and Khurasani refugees that fled to Syria and Anatolia after the death of Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah.

His mother had been an astrologer in the service of Jalal al-Din, and had managed to impress the Seljuk envoy Kamal al-Din Kamyar so much that the latter secured her a position at Sultan Kayqubad's court.[33] She came along with her husband and obtained for him a position for him as a secretary (*munshī*) in the chancery of the Seljuks. Thus, Ibn Bibi, who came from the same background as Nasawi, the author of the *Life of Jalal al-Din*, grew up and worked under the Seljuks of Rūm from their glory days under the reign of Kayqubad I, down to their gradual loss of power under the Mongols (more or less complete by 1278).[34]

In what follows, the argument will be made that Ibn Bibi wrote the history of three Seljuk sultans of Rūm as the final phase of the dynasty using the 'triad of kings' pattern perfected under Bayhaqi and Nizam al-Mulk. To put it more concretely, first the earlier Seljuk sultan Kaykhusraw I (r. intermittently 1192–1211) was portrayed as beginning the last cycle as a 'founder king' and ghazi who simultaneously lived very intimately with the Byzantines and lived a life of wandering and hardship. This is slightly reminiscent of Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah, for whereas these ghazi kings lived a life of deprivation, they were not slaves but rather dispossessed noble princes. They lived the harsh life of wandering soldiers because they had been forced to do so. Yet this life served as a kind of trial for at least Kaykhusraw, since he was to return and regain his throne; thus the first stage of the tripartite cycle. Next, in keeping with the second stage, the greatest Seljuk sultan, Kayqubad I (1219–36), was depicted not so much as a ghazi but as a ruler in charge of other ghazis. Kayqubad maintained order and prosperity in his kingdom, thereby embodying the climax stage of the 'triad of kings'. Finally, Kaykhusraw II was the debauched and inexperienced last king of the cycle who lost it all to a new set of wandering warriors – the Mongols. Let us see how Ibn Bibi recreated this cycle in his history.

The first major ghazi king in Ibn Bibi's history was Ghiyas al-Din Kaykhusraw, the youngest son of Sultan Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1156–88). After his father's death he was driven into exile by his brothers, and the young prince began roaming all over Anatolia in search of a refuge. He found a welcome in Constantinople at the court of a Byzantine emperor whom Ibn Bibi calls Fasilius (Basileus Alexis III).[35] Kaykhusraw's personification in Ibn Bibi as the ghazi king, the first of a new (but final) cycle of effective Seljuk rulers, relies on three basic characterizations: humiliation, his relative freedom from restrictive social norms, and ghaza. Kaykhusraw's humiliation comes about as a result of his fall from fortune. In one instance, Ibn Bibi described how the banished young prince had been insolently attacked by a band of peasants:

> When they arrived at the village of Ladik, in the district of Konya, the peasants of that village, on account of the excess of their stupidity and the surplus of their imbecility, rudely harassed the servants of Kaykhusraw, injuring some and looting part of their baggage. The sultan, upon witnessing the situation, pulled his reins out of that quarter and headed for Larende. He quickly wrote to his [usurping] brother a letter loaded with fiery rebuke.[36]

In another case, Kaykhusraw is treated impudently by Frankish warriors at the court of the Byzantine emperor, where the exiled Seljuk sultan was biding his time:

> The Frank began his idiocy (*sifāhat*) with the sultan. The sultan grew angry. He wrapped his turban around his knuckles and socked the Frank on the ear so hard that he fell unconscious out of the chair in which he was sitting. All the Franks and Romans there broke out in a great uproar and rushed at the sultan to kill him. Basileus quickly ordered his private retainers to beat back that crowd, and he himself came down from his throne and settled down that strife with tender and artful words, driving out everyone, both Romans and Franks.
>
> Afterwards, Basileus met privately with the exiled sultan, trying to soothe his mind with many kind words, doing his best to put down the fire of his vehemence with the waters of conciliation and gentleness. Tears began to streak down the sultan's cheeks which were hot and red from burning humiliation. He sighed with an injured heart on account of his fallen fortune.[37]

Indeed, Kaykhusraw's misfortune moves others to pity him: 'When [Kaykhusraw's sister] beheld the sultan's countenance, she began to weep for the change in his condition, his fall from fortune, and his predicament in exile'.[38] Kaykhusraw's shame is, of course, nothing unusual. It forms an integral part of the characteristics of the first king in the cycle, Sebüktegin being the clearest example. One need only recall the whipping of Sebüktegin by his master and his being forced to put a saddle on his back. The difference here is that Kaykhusraw is not a slave but a monarch whose throne has been usurped and is now enduring the vicissitudes of fortune – a development which may have had something to do with the biography of Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah.

A second feature of Kaykhusraw's life is his relative freedom from restrictive social norms. This condition relates to the distance of the exiled sultan from Konya, the primary urban center of Seljuk rule in Anatolia. The banquet scene at his sister's palace in which the sultan tries to drown his sorrows with pleasure and narcotics is a good example of this:

> Once all the arrangements for the feast had been set and done, Kaykhusraw went there and started to drink the scarlet wine, giving his ear to the melody of the organs, tossing aside the sorrows of bad fortune by bandying highs and lows with musical chords, blowing away the intoxicating poison of affliction by inhaling rich opium.[39]

Kaykhusraw's indulgence in recreation of this sort need not have been an act due disapproval in and of itself, yet it does stand in contrast to the behavior of his successor, the model ruler Kayqubad. It is indeed criticized by a minor character in Ibn Bibi's text, especially after the sultan's banqueting with the Byzantines, where he and Basileus had drunk heavily in order to celebrate Kaykhusraw's victory in a joust over the unruly Frank. Later on, this action throws a shadow of illegitimacy on the sultan's reign, provoking the following statement from a religious authority: 'As for Sultan Ghiyas al-Din [Kaykhusraw] – on account of his making an allegiance to a caffre potentate, and also because of his committing what is forbidden by Islamic law – the sultanate ought not reach him'.[40] This quality of relative immorality is not present in the depiction of previous first rulers or founders in the triad of kings (for example Sebüktegin), but does begin to appear thenceforth (for example, Babur). The idea may be that Kaykhusraw's behavior is not quite by the book, as it were, and this is a direct result of his wandering farther and farther away from the Muslim urban centers of the Seljuk domains such Konya or Sivas. Significantly, they are not repeated once the king regains his throne.

Finally, in addition to humiliation and relative moral laxity in wandering, Kaykhusraw, like other 'founder' or 'first kings' since the time of Nizam al-Mulk, personally takes the field of ghaza. Before him, the usurper Sulayman Shah Rukn al-Din had attempted to undertake a ghaza against the Georgians, but had failed and lost his life.[41] The credit and merit of ghaza is reserved for the lawful Kaykhusraw, who leads his ghazis once in Antalya and in a second time against the Byzantines in Rūm.[42] Thus, by combining ghaza, the endurance of humiliation, and engaging in rather uninhibited behavior in the looser atmosphere of areas in the periphery of Muslim urban centers, Ibn Bibi's Kaykhusraw essentially begins the last cycle of effective Seljuk rulers in Anatolia. Perhaps the words attributed to the sultan himself express this state most clearly. According to the author, the Seljuk potentate had at some point composed the following poem:

> I, like [the hero] Jamshid, was filled with sorrow and wandered about the earth. At times I swam in the sea like whales, at times I prowled in the fields like leopards. At times I resided in Istanbul, at times I bedded down in army camps. For a while I stayed in the Maghrib, for a while I was with the Berbers. Two-faced fortune! For years my whole labor was with swords and arrows, fighting Franks. Ah the battles that I saw and the wars I fought! I gave many a swipe of the sword and withstood innumerable blows. Finally, when the kindness of the Lord turned its face to me, the turning of the Wheel too favored me.[43]

Thus, in the person of Kaykhusraw, the first king of the new royal triad had been established by Ibn Bibi. Now, if the tripartite pattern is operative here, one would expect him to be followed by a 'law-and-order' sultan in the style of Mahmud of Ghazna. This is indeed the case, for Ibn Bibi then fronts Kaykhusraw's son Kayqubad as such a paragon of justice and good governance. Regarding 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad's enthronement, the author wrote:

> From the first moment of their arising till the time of their lowering, never have the banners of Islam cast their shadows on a king who nourished religion, controlled the kingdom, took care of the subjects, incinerated Satan, protected the world and accumulated buildings as did 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad. If Abu Nasr al-'Utbi were to return from his blessed grave to the earth [and praised him in the language] that he had used in eulogizing Sultan [Mahmud of Ghazna] then [all the neighboring kings would have declared themselves his vassal].[44]

Ibn Bibi's language leaves no doubt as to what literary prototype stands behind his depiction of the last great Seljuk monarch. What is interesting here, however, is that although he compares Kayqubad with Mahmud as depicted in 'Utbi, it is not the ghazi Mahmud of 'Utbi's *Yamini*, but rather the 'law-and-order' Mahmud of Nizam al-Mulk that the author has in mind. Here, the importance of the development of the image of Mahmud in the late eleventh-century texts such as Bayhaqi's history, the *Siyasat'namah* and the *Qabus'namah* can be fully appreciated. Even though the audience of 'Utbi would read a biography of Mahmud which, as often as not, celebrated his Indian ghazas, what they would remember from their perusal of the gests of the Ghaznavid sultan would be his undertakings as the protector of stability and religion – in other words, the idealized Mahmud of eleventh-century bureaucrats. At some point, Ibn Bibi actually identifies Kayqubad's role models:

> Of all the former Muslim kings and sultans, Kayqubad had faith in Sultan Mahmud son of Sebüktegin and Qabus son of Vushmgir. He praised and imitated their characteristics and virtues. The too books *Alchemy of Happiness* and Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyar al-Muluk* [i.e., *Siyasat'-namah*] were always in his hands.[45]

What is even more interesting is that Kayqubad's behavior resembles not only that of the great monarchs of the eleventh century, but even the ideals of earlier historians – the very sources or predecessors whose values the likes of Bayhaqi and Nizam al-Mulk had echoed in their own compositions. What is being referred to here is none other than the tenth-century historian Mas'udi. This is not to say that Ibn Bibi had read the *Muruj al-Dhahab*. Rather, and this is even more remarkable, Ibn Bibi's Kayqubad somehow personifies the ideals whose absence in the reigning Abbasid caliphs of the

ninth century had been lamented by Mas'udi. One might recall, for example, Mas'udi's critical portrayal of the caliph Mutawakkil (Chapter 4). The caliph was very keen on procuring fancy clothing for himself, but when it came to generosity 'Mutawakkil was not particularly known for his liberality in giving'. The caliph also was infamous for another vice of his – Mas'udi had complained that

> In the court of no other previous Abbasid caliph was there such license for ludicrous buffoonery, of the kind that had long been abandoned by the general public, as there was in Mutawakkil's. It was he indeed who introduced all these anew and spontaneously,

Through this negative example, Mas'udi was naturally saying that the good monarch ought not waste his money on pointless luxury, but show generosity personally, and avoid mindless entertainment. Three hundred years later Ibn Bibi (who, as far as we can tell, had never read Mas'udi) describes the behavior of his ideal monarch Kayqubad using very similar topoi:

> [Kayqubad] would constantly audit the amounts in the treasury, and on the one hand, he would refrain from excess and profligacy in spending. However, on the other hand, in taking care of guests and ambassadors, he was a surging ocean and a pouring cloud. Jest and mockery had absolutely no place during his festive audiences. Rather, he would try to immerse himself in the history of kings and the mention of the praiseworthy quality of former rulers.[46]

Kayqubad here is almost the mirror image of Mas'udi's Mutawakkil (and other caliphs). He does not waste money needlessly, but does not hold back the hand of liberality. Jest and mockery have no place in his gatherings. Rather, the sultan tries to follow the good example of his predecessors. What we have here is nothing less that the personification of certain political ideals that go back at least to the early tenth century. It might be viewed skeptically as the repetition of a discourse by a veritable army of historians who reproduced and constantly arranged their subject matters according to these political values. That is possible. But the text here is constantly asserting that Kayqubad spent his time reading these very compositions carefully and frequently, and it is equally plausible that the similarity of his deeds with the above-mentioned political ideals were in fact the result of his internalizing and imitating them.

In either case, it is clear that Ibn Bibi's Kayqubad occupied the second position or the climax stage of the triad of kings. He was indeed, as Mahmud of Ghazna had been, just and competent. Of course, since the cycle inevitably churns on, there would be no option but for the last king of this triad to be presented as the weak and debauched opposite of his forerunner. And indeed, in Ibn Bibi's text, Kayqubad's successor, Kaykhusraw II, was

exactly such a monarch. Little wonder, then, that his incompetence leads to the defeat of the dynasty at the hand of new set of simple, fierce, wandering warriors – namely, the Mongols.

Ibn Bibi mourned the death of Kayqubad in these retroactively prophetic words: 'With Kayqubadh's death, the back of Islam was broken and the bond of kingdom and religion snapped.'[47] He was succeeded by a young Kaykhusraw II. Taking advantage of the new king's inexperience, a peculiarly vicious lord by the name of Sa'd al-Din Köpek takes control of the youthful monarch in a kind of coup and begins eliminating the various men of state and confiscating their property.[48] Köpek uses the drunken state of the sultan to obtain from him an order of quick execution for a rival: 'The sultan rushed into the punishment of Emir Taj al-Din Parvanah from the utter immoderation of youth and the intoxication of wine'.[49] This episode is curiously reminiscent of the execution of a Ghaznavid lord by his rivals who get the order of execution from a drunken Sultan Mas'ud.

In any event, the sultan's inebriated negligence of affairs is no secret to his opponents, who criticize him publicly. For example, when the Baba'i revolt breaks out in Anatolia, led by a Sufi preacher, the rebels 'denounced the lifestyle of the king, his complete engrossment in drinking, his deviation from the path of God and imitation of the rightly guided caliphs.'[50] In effect, the breakdown of social order during this upheaval foreshadows the invasion of the Mongols and the crushing defeat of the Seljuks at their hands. As one Seljuk statesman is reported to have said, 'the affairs of kingship sank to such a low because of the disarray, immaturity, and foolishness of the sultan and his companionship and drinking with vile louts'.[51] Essentially, the sultan had lost his throne even before the Mongols unseated him in 1243.

Even the invasion itself brings out all the symptoms of the crumbling internal disorder of the dynasty. Early on in the war, more experienced men had counseled the king to wait for allies to arrive; however, hotheaded youths had demanded a direct confrontation, until 'the ears of the sultan were saturated with their vain boast'.[52] These vainglorious youths also create dissension in the camp by quarreling with the Christian associates of the Seljuks and refusing to heed their advice.[53]

When the battle breaks out, it is in fact this very internal disarray of the Seljuks and not the military might of the Mongols that seals the fate of Anatolia at Köse Dağh. The scene echoes other similar confrontations between the armies of crapulous rulers and unencumbered swift wanderers (Seljuks versus Mas'ud, Ya'qub versus Tawq):

> At the start of battle the army of Rūm fought so energetically that their horses were worn out from the heaviness of their loads. The Mongol army turned and the army of Rūm thought that the Mongols were running away in fear. They informed the sultan that the Mongols had been defeated. He was overjoyed. They began congratulating one another and preparing for a feast. In the midst of all this, Bayju [the Mongol commander] saw that the horses of the army of Rūm could barely move anymore. He swung back and ordered his men to shower them with arrows, martyring them all, even the Franks and the Georgians. When the sultan saw that defeat had been reversed and all the commanders and soldiers had attained the rank of martyrdom, he placed a scarf on his face and wept bitterly ... He stayed there till the time of evening prayer until his harem and elegant treasures had been sent off to Tokat.[54]

Thus Ibn Bibi depicted three Seljuk Sultans of Rūm as the triad of kings, with Kaykhusraw I as the founder ghazi, Kayqubadh as the great king and Kaykhusraw II as the corrupt king who lost it all to a band of wandering soldiers. The triad of kings, initially formulated by Ghaznavid and Seljuk authors (while drawing on even older models), had by the thirteenth century been fully formed and could be used and reused by Muslim historians to describe the rise and fall of dynasties. The fact that we find such a thorough example of this model in Anatolia is of course immensely relevant for the study of the political and historiographical development of affairs in the region over the next two centuries. Indeed, the hotly debated topic of the ghazas of the Ottoman House can for the first time be analyzed against the background of its discursive and literary tradition.

6 Tatars and Ottomans

In December 1398, the infamous Central Asia conqueror Timur invaded India and wrecked the place entirely.[1] On his return in the spring of 1399, he dispatched a letter to one of his sons, describing the campaign and explaining the supposed reasons for it. Over the centuries the document made its way to France, where it was catalogued in the Bibliothèque National. The part of Timur's letter that rationalized the invasion reads as follows:

> We set out to do ghaza and jihad against the quarters of infidelity in certain provinces of India. They had brought word to our glorious audience that once the late [ruler of India], Sultan Firuz, had answered the call of God and had gone from the abode of death to the eternal dwelling place, his own purchased slaves would not give the city of Delhi and other lands under the jurisdictions of Islam to his children. These usurpers had furthermore stretched out the hand of oppression and transgression, making pillage and rapine their habit, launching the vessels of audacity in the seas of lewdness, shutting the gates of traffic to merchants, perfecting highway robbery, and never neglecting to inflict any imaginable havoc. We crossed rivers whose currents were almost as rapid as the wind, and passed mountains whose altitude seemed as high as the sky. We traversed numerous deserts, destroying idol-houses and killing caffres, until we reached the environs of the city of Delhi.[2]

Following this brief introduction of motives the main body of the letter started, relating in great detail Timur's battle against the ruling Muslim king of Delhi and the fall of the city. It is obvious that the few perfunctory allusions to 'caffres' and 'idol-houses' are completely tangential to the chief reasons for the assault and the actual confrontation. Rather, the world-conqueror was keen to portray himself as the defender of the lawful birthrights of maligned and helpless princes. Either 'ghaza and jihad' meant to Timur a war prosecuted upon highway robbers and oppressive usurpers, or, more likely, his secretaries merely added the required two or three religiously loaded words that a contemporary audience would expect to hear in association with a campaign in India.

However, within five years of this letter, the matter changed entirely. In March 1404, Nizam al-Din Shami, a learned preacher of sorts, completed the *Book of Conquest* (*Zafarnamah*), a history of Timur undertaken at the world-conqueror's own behest.[3] As stated before, Timur had clearly envisioned a kind of authorized biography of himself for a broad audience. He had specifically charged Shami to write the text in a simple style that would be accessible to all.[4] Nizam al-Din did so, and when he reached the section detailing the sack of Delhi in 1398, he retold the event in a language that was a very different from the victory proclamation of Timur himself. Here, the motives were altered completely and the focus of emphasis had shifted. Shami's account runs as follows:

> They had brought word to his noble audience that although the standards of Muhammad's religion have been raised in the provinces of Delhi and India, and the impression of the words of monotheism have been registered upon the coins of that country, nevertheless all those environs are still stained by the filth of the existence of caffres, and the whole region is rendered miserable by the darkness of idol-worshipping masses. The kings of that place have been merely content to collect taxes from them and have left them to their unbelief and gloom. They neither try to drive away darkness from them, nor do they spend time doing away with their harm.
>
> When the sultan of the auspicious conjunctions [Timur] heard this, he decided to cleanse those provinces of the filth of the existence of caffres, and to subdue the mutiny of caffres with his shining fiery blade. He made his vow to do ghaza against them and set out for that country with an army as innumerable as desert sands, as countless as heavenly stars, all as favored with fortune as Mahmud [of Ghazna], but as devoted to him as Ayyaz.[5]

There are some strange, but crucial, changes here. Whereas the first words of this passage echo almost verbatim Timur's own letter ('They brought word to his noble/glorious audience'), the motives and the focus have been completely altered. In Timur's epistle, reference to caffres and ghaza was quite perfunctory and *en passant*. He seemed much more eager to justify his invasion of India as a move to return to deprived princes their rightful inheritance. Here, however, Nizam al-Din Shami had totally rewritten the account to make it appear as a holy war from the start. The existence of idol worship was posited as the cause for the invasion, and nothing was said of usurpers. Moreover, a reference had been made to Mahmud of Ghazna. However, there is a peculiar twist to this comparison: remarkably, it was Timur's soldiers, not himself, who were compared to the heroic ghazi of old. The implication, naturally, was that although the world-conqueror would earn the merits of ghaza, he was not just a ghazi but a superior being in charge of other ghazis, even those who were as great as

the legendary Mahmud. They were indeed as Ayyaz to him, Ayyaz being the name of Sultan Mahmud's favorite slave.

Undoubtedly, something had happened between 1399 and 1404 that instigated the rewriting of Timurid campaigns in India as ghaza, but that simultaneously made it necessary to assert the submissiveness of great ghazis to the Central Asian conqueror. The seminal event that had changed the course of world history was none other than the encounter between Timur and the Ottoman ruler Bayezid I, leading upto the Battle of Ankara, fought in July of 1402. In what follows, the argument will be made that, through an epistolary dialogue between the two rulers extending over two years, not only did Timur begin to present himself as a champion of ghaza but so too did the Ottoman monarch claim that ghaza was his primary dynastic identity. Timur's assertion of superiority in turn made him portray himself as the master of other ghazis (read, the Ottomans).

Thus, by the end of Bayezid's reign an old Anatolian implication of ghaza, as war against Mongols, resurfaced and was incorporated in to Ottoman self-presentation. Also significant is that no matter what ghaza meant to the early rulers of the family, it seems that by the start of the fifteenth century it had become politically quite important as a marker of dynastic identity. As a result, the events of the Battle of Ankara began to be perceived and written about within the discourse of ghaza and ghazi kings.

Indeed, Bayezid's defeat in the hands of Timur created a crisis of legitimacy for the Ottomans. To the contemporary audience familiar with the 'triad of kings' cycle, the question would have arisen whether something similar to the destruction of a corrupt final king of a dynasty (in this case Bayezid the Ottoman) had taken place in the hands of rough, austere warriors (in this case, Timur and his Tatar army). The intense debate among Ottoman historians regarding Bayezid's drinking is related precisely to this point. It was crucial for the earliest dynastic historians (such as Ahmedi and Shukrullah) to deny that Bayezid ever touched alcohol and to praise the Sultan's austerity. Put otherwise, in order to recover from the crisis of 1402, the Ottoman dynasty had to show that it had not yet reached the third cycle. The clock had to be reset, and an Ottoman sultan had to occupy the role of the ghazi king, thus restarting the cycle of the rise of the state again.

Correspondence between Bayezid and Timur

The records of this originary exchange between the two monarchs are not preserved independently, and neither are they reproduced in the earliest specimens of Ottoman dynastic histories – most of which date to the second half of the fifteenth century. Rather, the letters between Timur and Bayezid are found in a sixteenth-century compilation of diplomatic briefs, collected by a certain Feridun Bey (d. 1583), and entitled *The Compositions of Sultans* or *Münşeatu's-Selatin*. As early as 1920, E. G. Browne noticed and summarized the content of this correspondence, drawing attention to their historical potential.[6] Indeed, the letters suggest that, far from being a static and clear idea that may be wholly accepted or entirely rejected, the notion of ghaza and its relation to the genesis of the House of Osman developed gradually and was formulated (or reformulated) in an enduring manner during the exchange between Timur and Bayezid.

However, before analyzing this dialogue, a thorny issue must be confronted – that is, the trustworthiness of Feridun Bey as a source and the authenticity of the letters. It is no great secret that the reliability of Feridun Bey's work in general has been a contentious issue in modern scholarship. The controversy began when, between 1917 and 1922, Mükrimin Halil subjected the purportedly early letters of Sultans Osman and Orhan to a critical analysis and found them to be forged. Not only were the titles used in these exchanges historically inaccurate; the text of many of them also turned out to be a fabrication based on older Central Asian epistles.[7] This earned the *Münşeat* a reputation for almost utter fraudulence in standard works of reference such as Mordtman's *Encylopedia of Islam* article, and especially Babinger's entry in *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und Ihere Werke*.[8] Soon thereafter, however, more studies led to a partial rehabilitation of the text. Halil Edhem discovered an original letter of the Ottoman Sultan Selim I, the content of which corresponded almost exactly with the version quoted in Feridun's *Münşeat*.[9] In 1932 J. Rypka, while not directly tackling the issue of authenticity, found a number of dispatches relating to the Crimean affairs of the Empire to be reliable enough to propose a chronology for them.[10] Holter, in 1933, discovered twenty-two documents from the sixteenth century, in various archives and libraries, and these also matched satisfactorily the versions reproduced in the *Münşeat*.[11] Finally, in 1953, L. Fekete compared an independently surviving copy of the victory proclamation of Murad II from the Battle of Varna with the one found in Feridun Bey's, and concluded that while the author had not fabricated this text, he seems to have relied not on the original but on other (perhaps older) collections for compiling the part of his book that dealt with the early years of Ottoman rule.[12] Where does all this leave us with regard to the supposed exchange between Timur and Bayezid?

The reported altercation of the two monarchs belongs to the earlier parts of the *Münşeat*. While it occurs just after the stage of proven fabrication (i.e., after Osman, Orhan and Murad I), it still falls short of the decidedly reliable parts (i.e., from Murad II onwards, and especially the sixteenth-century material). At the same time, Timurid historians such Nizam al-Din Shami certainly corroborate the fact that there was an exchange – echoing, moreover, the aggressive and insolent tone of the addressees. One of the letters (the first) is quoted almost verbatim in the writings of the Syrian historian Ibn 'Arabshah. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, the correspondence reveals a gradually evolving portrayal of ghaza, one that develops through

dialogue, letter by letter, and whose first formulations are not quite in line with the later and more standard depictions of the progenitors of the House of Osman as ghazis. Surely, if Feridun Bey or his sources had forged these letters, they would have aimed at a cleaner retrojection – one in harmony with the image of the dynastic forefathers in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century chronicles. After all, this is exactly what the decidedly fabricated letters of Osman and Orhan had done. Based on all these reasons, the letters will be considered as sufficiently reliable for investigation, and it will be seen how ghaza developed to be a means of legitimation and survival for the Ottomans in their dealings with the Timurids.

There exist two memoranda warning the Ottoman emir of Timur's advance. One was from Ahmad Jalayir, ruler of Azerbayjan and Baghdad, and the second from Kara Yusuf, prince in eastern Anatolia. Bayezid's answers are interesting in that they show him regarding Timur as a legitimate target of ghaza, and a greater pest than his Christian neighbors. Bayezid's reply to Kara Yusuf is undated, and his response to Sultan Ahmad of Baghdad dated circa 9 May 1396.[13] To Ahmad, he wrote that he had been about to attack the Tekvur[14] of Istanbul when 'this news [of Timur] arrived. Perforce, we accepted his [the Tekvur's] suit for peace, and have now come to Tokat in order to repulse the broken Timur, who, according to the legal ruling of the *ulema* (scholars) of mankind, is worse than caffres.'[15] Bayezid's letter to Kara Yusuf is in harmony with the letter to Sultan Ahmad. He wrote that he had ordered the commanders of Rūm to extinguish the fire of Timur, 'the atrocious dog', and likewise, Kara Yusuf too should contact the rulers of Kurdistan and the Caspian principalities in order to ward off the army of Timur, 'fighting against whom should be reckoned tantamount to the greatest ghaza (*ghazā-i akbar*).'[16] Again, the main point here is that Bayezid thought that encountering Timur was an act of ghaza.

Following this exchange, four sets of letters between Bayezid and Timur have survived. These letters are not dated, but the correspondence should have taken place in a timespan extending from right before the summer of 1400 (when Timur invaded Sivas in central Anatolia) to the Battle of Ankara (28 July 1402). The two rulers started with quite a spiteful language, and then modified their rhetoric to more courteous speech. It was through this dialogue that the image of the Ottomans as ghazi kings was solidified.

The first epistles are in Arabic. Timur began the exchange with a brief message, opening curtly with 'Know this, you king in Rūm, Yıldırım Bayezid, that I am the new sultan in the countries of God',[17] and demanding with intimidation the return of Kara Yusuf and Ahmad Jalayir, who had fled from Timur to Anatolia. Bayezid's answer was equally insulting. What is more, and this is quite significant, he tried to overawe Timur by the threat of his ghazis, who are, curiously enough, associated with Syria and Aleppo and not, say, the Balkans, the borderlands of the Ottoman principality with Christendom. Furthermore, Bayezid reiterated his view that Timur was worse than any caffre. The letter reads thus:

> Praise the lord who honored us with Islam and graced us with ghaza from amongst the sultans of the Arabs and the Persians [i.e., everyone]. Know this, you atrocious dog, who is called Timur and who is more caffre than the King Tekvur, we read your letter, you cursed man. Do you count me as the kings of the Persians or the rabble Tatars of the steppe, or as the army of Indians with a mob of soldiers, or like the kings of Iraq and Herat with a numerous and disorderly throng? Or do you suppose that I do not have in my possession the ghazis of Islam, such as the armies of Aleppo and Syria? And it is proved to them both that 'he who turns away and rejects God, God will punish him with a mighty punishment'.[18] Sure enough, all you do is to break promises and vows, shed blood, and violate the honor of women ... I will make it brief. Our whole business here and the bulk of our affairs are to fight the enemies of religion, be they caffres or apostates. Now, [after this letter], if you do not come here, may your wives be irreversibly divorced from you. But if you head out to my country, and I run away from you and do not meet you in battle, then of course, may my wives be irreversibly divorced. Peace to all Muslims. God damn you and all your followers till judgment day.[19]

One can see in this letter how Bayezid responded to Timur's claim that he was the new sultan in the countries of God. He dismissed those whom Timur had defeated as ineffectual, and he rejected Timur's Islam by cataloguing his violence towards other Muslims. Against him, Bayezid presented himself and his followers as true Muslims who spent all their time fighting the enemies of Islam – which would include, if need be, Timur. Also important is the fact that, by being seasoned on the fields of ghaza, Bayezid's army was supposed to be manned with much better warriors than anyone Timur had encountered up to that day. Yet these ghazis were not soldiers from the Balkans but rather from Syria and Aleppo, perhaps recalling the active history of warfare between the Syrians and the crusading Franks. A final (but fundamental) point is that in this letter Bayezid did not yet call himself a ghazi, but rather a monarch in charge of other ghazis (from Syria and Aleppo). We will return to this point later.

This first exchange led to Timur's invasion and capture of Sivas in the summer of 1400. From there Timur was diverted towards Syria, where he spent most of 1401. The second set of correspondence started after this time. The two switched to Persian, and toned down their rhetoric a bit. Again, Timur initiated the communication, making references to the first altercation. In place of the short opening of the first letter, where Timur had referred to Bayezid simply as 'king in Rūm', this time Timur started thus, 'To His Grace [i.e. Bayezid], of just deeds and marked with nobility, the

great fair noble prince who has established the foundations of fairness and reverence,... the source of the works of splendid ghaza', and so on.[20] These titles seem to be an acknowledgement of Bayezid's claim that his whole business was battling the enemies of religion, and that he was 'more virtuous than all the sultans of the east and west'.[21] Timur then set down his main points, these being that Bayezid should acknowledge his over-lordship and avoid warfare:

> The kings and sultans of the world are a large group who are proud to serve in our path with their lives, in spite of the dignity of their rank and pomp. Then why does he [Bayezid] cause anxiety, especially since we are like a father to him in age?... Perhaps he does not know us, but nevertheless, for us the support of the people of ghaza and the defense of Muslims, the repulsion of the evil of strangers, and the safeguarding of our honor is paramount and necessary.[22]

Timur's main point was that Bayezid should not begrudge joining Timur's service. In exchange, Timur would be willing to support him in his ghaza (of which Bayezid had boasted in the previous letter). Nor was Timur bent on killing and violating the honor of Muslims, as Bayezid had accused him; rather, he was their protector. Nevertheless, the Ottoman is warned not to challenge Timur's honor. Here, one can begin to see the formation of the Timurid position which was retrojected by historians such as Nizam al-Din Shami to the description of the sack of Delhi. Timur was presenting himself for the first time as the supporter of other ghazis, whom he enjoined to submit to his suzerainty.

Following this, Timur gave his account of how he subdued Anatolian towns such as Sivas, Malatya and Sinop, pointing out how easily he captured these, while Bayezid had laid siege to them for months with questionable success.[23] Next, Timur taunted Bayezid by pointing out how Timur's ranks had swelled with deserters from amongst Bayezid's own commanders and soldiers after the conquest of Sivas.[24]

Timur's third point is very important. Timur wrote that he and his Ottoman counterpart should not fight, because the caffre Franks might take advantage of the situation – 'while Muslims fall upon each other, the abject caffres (*kuffār-i khāksār*) might stretch out their hands' – and that 'this would be the aiding of the religion of the caffres'.[25] The significance of this usage lies in its possible origins. As we saw, in Timur's first letter he neither referred to Ottoman ghaza nor seemed interested in how his fight with Bayezid might provide the 'Franks' with opportunities. Timur seems to have become aware of Ottoman ghaza from Bayezid's letter. This second point, aiding and abetting caffres, is raised around the time of his capture of Sivas, and these were the very issues that had occupied the former ruler of Sivas Sultan Burhan al-Din a few years before Timur's attack. According to Burhan al-Din's chronicler, 'Aziz al-Din Astarabadi, the sultan had once

turned down the opportunity to attack Murad I's territories while the latter was off fighting in the Balkans, because 'this necessarily involves the insulting of religion [Islam], and empowering infidelity'.[26] It appears, then, that after entering Anatolia Timur had become familiar with the discourse of local princes about the Ottomans, and thenceforth began appropriating it in his own address to Bayezid.

Returning to the letter, Timur's fourth point involved the soldiers in both camps. In response to Bayezid calling him an apostate worse than caffres for the atrocities committed by his army, Timur responded:

> They have always called our victorious soldiers irreligious caffres of bad faith and ugly belief. God forbid it. Actually we are always grasping the hems of God's grace, while most of yours are poll-tax-paying caffres. If divine guidance is possible for your men, why would it not be for our soldiers who are Muslims and born Muslims?[27]

In dialogue, Timur defended his fighters from the charge of apostasy, and portrayed them as just as likely, or more so, to be blessed by divine assistance in case of an encounter between the two. Here he suggested that most of Bayezid's army were not even Muslims. This is either a reference to the Janissary system created through the *devşirme*, for which there exist at least two sources from the 1390s,[28] or the presence of Christian allies in the Ottoman camp. Timur finally closed with reminding Bayezid that Timur was his superior in rank, since he had successfully undertaken world conquest and was furthermore of Ilkhanid (Mongol) lineage; thus he must be shown obedience. This would seem like a perfectly appropriate strategy, since, at least based on numismatic evidence, the Ottomans had not tried to assert full independence from the Ilkhanid governors in the fourteenth century.[29]

Bayezid's rejoinder opens equally politely. 'The charming and delightful letter, honoring and reproaching, of His Grace the great Khan and grand Khaqan Timur arrived.'[30] But, following this courteous salutation, he proceeds to answer Timur's points one by one. This letter is of utmost importance for Ottoman historiography on account of its systematic presentation of the Ottoman sultans antedating Bayezid as ghazis. It also diverges in some important ways from the same accounts in the later Ottoman historical texts (more on this later). It is, furthermore, essential to note that Bayezid's presentation of his forefathers had developed gradually through the correspondence with Timur and therefore in dialogue.

In answer to Timur's boast that his ranks had swelled with deserters from Bayezid's camp, Bayezid said the following:

> He [Timur] has mocked the small number of our soldiers and has boasted the numerousness of his own army. Let him mark that my forefather of excellent lineage,[31] Ertuğrul (God bless him), along with nearly

> three hundred horsemen, dashed himself against the army of the caffre Tatar Mongols who had overwhelmed Sultan 'Ala al-Din (Kayqubad) the Seljuk prince – dashed himself, I say, against a mountain of iron, and tore open the Elburz-like[32] line of the Mongols with the power of his mace, and with the help of God, broke and defeated them. He therefore became worthy of a favor, and was honored with the position of march-lordship of the frontier-lands (*ṣughūr*) of the Muslims. After him, his rightful heir, Sultan Osman was established in *Yunan* due to divine approbation, without rebelling against any of the sultans of his age. He made ghaza his slogan, and jihad his means of earning for this world and the next. By the grace of God, up to this day, which is our fourth or even fifth turn, we have captured such forts and countries from accursed Tekvurs that no sultan living now or before could even dream of; such forts indeed that Malatya and Sinop do not even measure up to a little turret of their battlements. The world and what is in it are like a little hillock in the gaze of our power. If we had set out to destroy countries and persecute subjects in world-conquest, we would easily have captured everything from east to west. Instead we have struggled in repelling the opponents of Muhammad's religion. Moreover, he [Timur] has called our army born of heathens (*gabr-zādah*). There is no shame in that. All the companions [of the prophet Muhammad] were thus. Sons of non-Muslims who are kind are better than sons of Muslims who are cruel. Up to this day, not one person from the Ottoman House has repelled a foe with flattery or a ruse. Rather, we come direct as the sun that lights the world. Nor have we ever done anything out of self-restraint and will never do so either. So, whenever His Honor steps forward and confirms his intention to fight, we shall say 'I rely upon God' and will be ready. That is all.[33]

Thus, through a fairly nasty exchange with Timur, the identity of the Ottomans as ghazi sultans emerged and solidified. Timur had demanded submission based on a seniority that came from his ascendancy through world conquest and his Mongol lineage. Furthermore, claimed Timur, after the easy conquest of Malatya, Sinop and Sivas, his army had grown to a massive force. Bayezid answered that his lineage was also excellent, and his great grandfather had already defeated the Mongols of whose decent Timur had boasted. Moreover, Bayezid's ancestor had beaten the above-mentioned Mongols with only a handful of soldiers, meaning that Timur's massive force did not intimidate his Ottoman adversary. Note here Bayezid's insistence on the legitimacy of his line and the absence of rebellion in history of his family, asserted in association with the history of Mongol rule in Anatolia. Also noteworthy is the fact that he derived lawfulness of rule in the frontier-lands (*ṣughūr*) ultimately from the Sejuk Sultan 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad (r. 1220–37). These are crucial points, and will be discussed in more detail below. Finally, Bayezid dismissed Timur's world conquest (on which he had

based his claim of supremacy) as both easy and morally suspect. In return, his claim to fame was rooted in waging ghaza, which was much more significant and also morally commendable.

Timur actually accepted Bayezid's self-presentation, and in the next letter addressed him 'the protector of ghazis and *mujāhids*'.[34] With regard to the history of the Ottoman dynasty, Timur also acknowledged their ghaza:

> What he has written, saying, that for generation after generation they have constantly fought with caffres and the enemies of religion, is known to us. Now we want there to exist such a state of affairs that His Honor will be able to get busy doing jihad with the caffres of those regions with an easy mind, and that we may aid and assist him in any way possible. This way, we also might profit and be blessed with the merit of his jihad against the damned caffre Franks. Likewise, he also might gain and profit from the merit of the ghazas which we ourselves have undertaken with the caffres of eastern domains.[35]

There are several points of interest here. First, one might note that Timur's mode of addressing of Bayezid gradually developed, over three letters, from 'king of Rūm' to 'the source of the works of splendid ghaza' and then 'the protector of ghazis and *mujahids*'. Also, even though he claimed to have known the history of the Ottomans of which Bayezid had reminded him, he had actually given no indication of such knowledge except in response to a presentation of it by Bayezid. In the third letter he began to call himself a ghazi too, and this very likely referred to his campaigns in India. This in turn led to a sense of camaraderie of the frontiers through the prosecution of ghaza.

Thus, ghaza was fixed in meaning through this correspondence. Both Bayezid and Timur came out of the exchange claiming to have committed these raids. Both monarchs, moreover, began to retroject this assertion into their respective pasts – Timur to his wars in the east, and Bayezid to his whole family history. Finally, it seems that for the Ottomans, ghaza often implied posing a challenge to Mongol world conquest, whether by the Ilkhans or by Timur.

The rest of the correspondence continued without any major development in the self-presentation of the two rulers. As is well known, demands were not met, and war followed. Bayezid was utterly crushed in a battle on the plains of Ankara.[36] His kingdom was divided among his sons and a civil war ensued, leading to the eventual victory of Mehmed I. On the other side, Timur returned to Samarqand to undertake a great campaign in China, but he died in 1404 and was succeeded by his son Shahrukh. Hereafter, whereas ghaza slowly fell by the wayside for the descendants of Timur, it gradually dominated the Ottoman political discourse in the fifteenth century. Before charting the trajectory of the rise of ghaza in Ottoman dynastic self-presentation, however, it will be worthwhile to pursue a number of curious

issues that have arisen out of the analysis of the correspondence between Bayezid and Timur. There seem to have been some skeletons in the Ottoman family closet relating to the memory of Mongols and the associations of ghaza. As we saw, Bayezid considered Timur to have been a kind of Mongol, fighting whom amounted to the 'greatest ghaza'. Moreover, Bayezid was keen to portray his forefathers Ertuğrul and Osman as ghazis and enemies of the Mongols, while simultaneously insisting that the founders of his line were perfectly legitimate rulers, of high lineage, free from the blot of rebellion, and confirmed in their position as frontier marchlords by the Seljuk Sultan 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad, the greatest and the last independent Seljuk monarch before the Mongol invasion. The underlying assumption is, of course, that ghaza against the Mongols was a point of pride on the one hand, and a source of identification with lowborn rebels on the other. It should come as no surprise that Bayezid was merely echoing the political and cultural debates current in fourteenth-century Anatolia, and, while a study of these debates will not shed any more light on the factual history of the early Ottomans, it will nevertheless explain why the invasion of Timur (who was recognized as a resurrected Ilkhanid ruler) was so crucial in the emergence of ghaza as the dominant form of self-identification for the Ottoman dynasty in the fifteenth century.

Mongols, Rūm, and the fourteenth century

In the fields of today's central Turkey, on a summer day in 1243, not far from the city of Aksaray (southeast of Ankara), the Mongol commander Bayju dealt an overwhelming defeat to the Seljuk sultans of Rūm. This was at the Battle of Köse Dağ, after which the Mongols progressively tightened their hold on Asia Minor. By the early fourteenth century, however, the power of the Mongols was on the wane, and various small principalities had begun to fight for dominance and prestige all over Anatolia. Among these, the Ottomans were the most successful in the long run.

While these struggling princes left no literary records expressing their viewpoints, those who directly claimed the Mongol heritage did so. By examining the rare surviving work produced at one such setting, certain peculiar features of early fourteenth-century political discourse in Asia Minor can be reconstructed. The underlying assumptions and enigmatic references of Bayezid I, articulated in his letters to Timur in the first years of the fifteenth century, find their full expression here. Indeed, as Timur had convinced the Ottomans of his role as the resurrected Mongol Ilkhan, Bayezid had fallen back on an old Anatolian rhetoric of ghaza as anti-Mongol resistance, which simultaneously and paradoxically cast doubt on and affirmed his legitimacy.

In 1334, a minor official by the name Mahmud ibn Muhammad of Aksaray wrote a work of history entitled *Musamirat al-Akhbar wa Musayirat al-Akhyar*, chronicling in Persian the events of the reign of Seljuk and Mongol kings in Rūm. Aksarai, whose master Timurtash had just converted to Islam, saw the major players of his day as belonging to three basic camps. One was the ruling elite, to whom he often referred as 'Mongols and Muslims', or 'Mongols and Tajiks'.[37] Below them, local potentates were labeled based on their loyalty to the people in the first category. Those who rebelled against them, he branded uncharitably as 'bloody Turks', 'damned Turks who are the minions of Satan' or 'unlucky Turks'.[38] Those who remained loyal, he called generously 'generals of the outlying areas ... who struggled (*ijtihād nimādand* [from the same root as jihad]) to the utmost in protecting frontier fortresses (*sughūr*)'.[39] Then there were the Anatolian Christians against whom Aksarai wanted to direct the religious zeal of the local Muslims.

Being himself involved in the administration of the attenuated Mongol government and their Tajik/Muslim collaborators, Aksarai promoted cooperation with the rulers for the sake of justice, peace and stability. 'If someone has justice, although he be a caffre', he quoted from a poem, 'people will praise him till judgment day'.[40] To dismiss any misgivings about cooperation with kings who had until recently been pagans, he showcased the corruption and excessive pride of supposed Muslim rulers of his day and contrasted it with the simple and natural piety of the caffre Mongols. He told, for example, the following anecdote about the victory of Genghis Khan over Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah:

> When the envoys of Genghis Khan came to Sultan Muhammad and humbly delivered to him their message, he, relying on the numerousness of his army and the glory of his kingship, spoke pompously and said, 'While sitting on this throne, I will order my multitudes and servants everywhere to make those [Mongol] soldiers food for dogs.' When they told these words to Genghis Khan, he dismounted from his horse out of humility, lay his face upon the dust, and asked for help from God. He said, 'If Sultan Muhammad relies on his army, I rely on *Tangri*'. Thus, he showed humbleness and modesty, took refuge with God, and was victorious over Sultan Muhammad.[41]

In this curious anecdote, the nominally Muslim ruler is the true caffre, for he has forgotten God and has relied on his own earthly power. His Mongol adversary, who is allowed to use the Inner Asian word originally signifying a pagan god (Tangri), was portrayed by Aksarai as the true Muslim – the man who submits to divine power alone. The same kind of criticism can be observed in the section supposedly quoting the warnings of Genghis Khan's grandson Hülegü – the man who exterminated the Abbasid caliphate and sacked Baghdad – against Malik Nasir of Syria. Aksarai quotes a letter from Hülegü in which the Mongol commander admonishes his Muslim adversary in these words:

> Our soldiers have no fear of dying. Your prayers against us will not be answered, because what you earn is gained by unlawful means; because you have created innovation in religion; because you are far from faith and God; and because you do not uphold Friday and communal activities. You approve of wickedness and corruption, and are constantly in a state of coveting and mutiny.... Give your answer quickly, lest the fires of war light up and flare high ... lest no one among you should survive, and the earth be emptied of you. Clearly we have shown fairness and have given you warning.[42]

Regardless of Malik Nasir's dismissal of these charges, and of the authenticity of this report, the fact that Hülegü is allowed to bring them up against the Muslim rulers of his time is quite significant. The essence of this criticism is the same as in the 'Genghis Khan' account: the impiety and corruption of contemporary Muslim sovereigns deserve censure. Moreover, Hülegü's letter contains a second important component. He had given his opponents the chance to avoid bloodshed. In other sections of his history, Aksarai supported accepting such offers of amnesty from the Mongols in exchange for peace and safety. He relates a scene in which a rebellious emir who was urged by his supporters to flee before hostile Mongols protested in these words:

> Yes, it is easy enough and very possible to run away. But the Mongols will come here in our pursuit. Suffering will befall these regions and innocent Muslims will have to endure hardship. Is it right that for the sake of a few days of hope, the lives of an entire people should be caught up in devastation, oppression, and the enmity of the Mongols?[43]

The emir's words make it abundantly clear why Aksarai had given support to Mongol rule in Anatolia. These nominal pagans were far less corrupt than many of their Muslim counterparts, and collaboration with them further prevented unnecessary bloodshed and strife. It was also for this reason that Aksarai had denounced the rebellious Turks of his days.

A close look at Aksarai's retelling of the Battle of Köse Dağ (in which the Mongols trounced the Seljuks) is especially instructive. All the themes elaborated above are reflected in this account, abridged and translated below. It will also become apparent how Aksarai's political views were rooted in the traumatic memories of his own native town. It runs as follows:

> [The Mongol leader] Bayju came with countless soldiers to take Rūm, and he trekked from camp to camp until he reached Aksaray from Erzerum. He trampled down towns and regions under the hooves of his horses, and there was destruction. When he reached Aksaray, Sultan 'Izz al-Din [sic][44] and the men of state wanted to make peace with him and supply him with provisions, needs, and revenue. Bayju too wished to get along peaceably, and he was requesting a place of pasture for the winter and summer. But Judge 'Izz al-Din the vizier felt like doing a jihad and ghaza and kept saying, 'Glory is under the shadow of the sword'. To make it brief, egged on by Judge 'Izz al-Din, they decided to resist. It is the greatest mistake to fight the man who has sued for peace. The two parties met in the fields near 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad's caravanserai. They fought a massive battle and a great slaughter took place. The Mongol party gained victory over the army of Islam. Judge 'Izz al-Din reached the rank of martyrdom in that encounter. Sultan 'Izz al-Din fled Konya in defeat and went to Istanbul, taking refuge with the king of Rome. The treacherous and fearless Turks shot the *Beglerbeg* (commander) Yutash as he was fleeing. He died from that wound.
>
> Bayju pastured that winter in Aksaray, and as fate would have it, not one drop of snow or rain fell from the sky that winter-tide. The season passed, without any coldness of air, as though it had been spring or summer. The Mongol soldiers who were skinning the Muslims had no need of fur-coats themselves. This too was one of the favors that God granted those wicked caffres. Finally, Nizam al-Din Khurshid the *parvānah* [intimate of the sultan] and Mu'in al-Din the chamberlain went out and made peace with Bayju. Then the fires of unrest were extinguished. Bayju set up policemen (*shaḥna*) in Aksaray to put down the harm done by soldiers. He established justice, and people were able to hold markets again undisturbed, and freely engage in farming and plowing. The oath-taker would not be perjured if he swore that those soldiers who had seized the kingdom by the sword did not commit even one percent of the oppression that previously caffre-hearted nominal Muslims had done to the inhabitants of that province.[45]

Aksarai's account of the Battle of Köse Dağ in effect summarizes all of the main points scattered throughout his history. The coming of the Mongols and the destruction that they had wrought upon the inhabitants of Anatolia was a very personal matter for the author. It involved the traumatic memory of his native town, expressed very tersely by the metaphor of 'being skinned' by the Mongols. A strong nostalgia is present for the days of 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad, to whose memory stands a symbol of stability and welfare (the caravanserai), as contrasted with the utter destruction that had befallen the people of Asia Minor. All this devastation could have been avoided if practical men of state, including the sultan, had stuck to their first inclination for peace with Bayju. However, they were swayed by an overzealous judge with his rant of ghaza and heroism. He, of course, attained the martyrdom he sought, but the outcome for innocent people, as well the sultan, was a disaster. In the meantime, the 'treacherous Turks' had stabbed the members of the ruling elite in the back, shooting one of them down in his flight. Afterwards, however, once peace was negotiated, the caffre Mongols had ruled the town with more justice and integrity than any actual Muslim ever

had. This in turn legitimized the Mongol dominion over Anatolia in the author's day, and justified collaboration with them.

Rebels against this arrangement earned the derogatory epithet of 'Turk', and ghaza against this ruling order was to be avoided. However, Aksarai was not ignorant of the need to channel the potential religious enthusiasm that could lead to rebellion and/or ghaza in opposition to the Mongols. Aksarai therefore urged the waging of war upon the neighboring Christian kingdoms. For example, he told the commendable tale of the same Mu'in al-Din (who had made peace with Bayju) in his conquest of the Christian city of Sinop on the Black Sea coast.

> That victory, which was one of the greatest triumphs of Islam, was accomplished by Mu'in al-Din *parvānah*.[46] Ghaydan [?], who was the commander of the city, along with a great swath of rabble caffres, was mowed down as grass by the shining blade. They returned the cathedral mosque, which had been converted into a church, back into a mosque. Mu'in al-Din *parvānah* added a great appendage to its foundation and older structure. The recitation of the Koran replaced the recitation of the Gospels. The tolling of the bells ceased, and the sound of the call to prayer, which is the supreme sign of the message of Islam, flourished.[47]

The contrast between Mu'in al-Din *parvānah* and Judge 'Izz al-Din the vizier from the 'Köse Dağ' episode could not be sharper. While both deserved merit for fighting for Islam, 'Izz al-Din only managed to attain private martyrdom at a great cost to numerous others. Mu'in al-Din, however, achieved victory for the sake of religion, and brought about glory for Islam. In this way, Aksarai fronted the *parvānah* as an exemplary model for the Anatolians of his age. He made peace with the Mongols, thereby saving Muslim lives, and he spread the symbols of Islam over Christians, compensating for his accommodation of other caffres.

This hounding of the 'people of the book' seemed so excellent an idea to Aksarai that he boasted in the conclusion to his history that the ruler of his age, Timurtash, had managed to abolish a reprehensible old practice in Anatolia whereby

> The Jews and the Nazarenes had become so alike Muslims in their habiliments that no one could tell a Muslim from a caffre just by looking at him. But now Timurtash has differentiated Jews and Nazarenes by means of yellow turbans, hats, and strips of cloth that render them easily distinguishable, and the people of darkness have been humbled while the rank of Islam has been elevated.[48]

He finished his text by appending a letter by Ibn al-'Arabi to Sultan Kaykavus in which the famous thinker had enjoined the Seljuk sultan not to neglect imposing such restrictions on Christians and Jews. Whether or not these policies were actually enforced is beside the point. Aksarai's narrative shows how the ruling Muslim elite of Anatolia in the early years of the fourteenth century was coping with the realities of Mongol rule. The best policy was to work with them to ensure justice and peace for the local population. The zeal of religious fight could be channeled against neighboring Christian kingdoms or those dwelling under Muslim jurisdiction. The *parvānah* or loyal generals of the frontier areas (*ṣughūr*) were praised for adopting this practice. However, those who refused to follow this guiding principle and challenged the authority of the Mongols and Muslims were Turks who had to be suppressed. Ghaza is not mentioned much per se but is implicitly censured if against the Mongols.

Nevertheless, it was out of this 'ideological' context, this mental world, that the notion of ghaza assumed its particular meaning for the small principalities that arose from the ruins of the Seljuk/Mongol rule in Rūm. It is moreover against this background that much of the peculiarities of Bayezid's stance vis-à-vis Timur can be better understood. Once Timur had been identified with the Mongols, Bayezid would start to taunt him with the threat of ghaza, which in Anatolia and among Bayezid's forefathers had a strong anti-Mongol association. However, this would simultaneously brand him and his family as lowborn renegade Turks in the eyes of those who might have preferred making peace with the Central Asian conqueror. It was therefore important to represent the early Ottomans as legitimate frontier marchlords who had been confirmed in their position by the Seljuk Sultan 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad, the greatest pre-Mongol Anatolian ruler, for whom even the likes of Aksarai expressed admiration. All in all, it can be seen that the sources for the crucial encounter between Timur and Bayezid represent a manipulation of, not only events, but language and rhetoric that had already existed.

Yet there exists an uncomfortable gap of over sixty years between the time when Aksarai wrote his history and when Bayezid began posturing aggressively before Timur. Why did the Ottoman monarch need to rely on a century-old rhetoric to define his position against the world-conqueror? One possibility is that after the disappearance of the Mongols as meaningful actors in the political arena of Asia Minor, ghaza simply lost its significance as dynastic identity. It would follow then that when Bayezid had to revive the notion against his adversary, the nearest memory of it at hand was from the earlier decades of the fourteenth century, and this was loaded with all sorts of archaic conceptual baggage. Another possibility is that ghaza did remain significant, but had changed in meaning and been directed mostly against Christian neighbors. Therefore, when Timur appeared on the scene as new Mongol khan, Bayezid had to rely on an older meaning of the concept that would be more appropriate in the current crisis. Unfortunately, the parsimony of evidential material (largely epigraphy) from the middle and latter fourteenth century makes it difficult to decide.[49] On the other hand, there exist two texts from the late fourteenth century, composed for

rival emirates of the Ottomans, which display a similar anti-Mongol understanding of ghaza (when they used the term at all). In other words, it appears that by, say, the 1390s, not only Bayezid I but also his competitors in central Anatolia had positioned themselves against the Mongols, whether as ghazis or not.

The first of these two major narrative sources from the end of the fourteenth century was a Persian history written by 'Aziz ibn Ardashir Astarabadi for Sultan Burhan al-Din (d. 1398), ruler of Sivas (Central Anatolia). In the 541 pages that make up Mükrimin Halil's 1928 edition of this book, the words ghazi/ghaza occur only twice – once as a title of the semi-legendary Melik Danişmend, whose tomb was visited by Astarabadi's patron for good luck,[50] and then a second time where it was reported, almost as an aside, that 'in those days, [the Ottoman] Murad Bey [I] went to do ghaza with the caffres and was martyred there.'[51] All other fights against Christians – for example, the attack upon the 'Nazarene caffres' of the city of Trabzon – were not referred to as acts of ghaza.[52] On the other hand, Astarabadi and his patron were much more concerned with combating rival Muslim princes of central Anatolia, as well as with 'licentious Mongols', 'Turcoman rabble' and, especially, Timur and his 'Tatar and Chagatay devils'.[53] Curiously, the term 'Mongol' was occasionally used for the same neighboring princes who opposed Burhan al-Din. For instance, on one occasion Astarabadi wrote superciliously that his patron decided not to attack the territories of the Ottoman Murad I while he was off battling the caffres, even though 'the son of Osman was a simple Mongol, and had gone off to fight the caffres ignorantly and without the benefit of knowledge and understanding' (*az ḫīlat-i 'ilm va ḥikmat 'āṭil va 'ārī*).[54]

That Burhan al-Din should refer to Murad I as a Mongol is noteworthy. Much as Bayezid I had done, the ruler of Sivas had also claimed legitimacy based on his connection to the Seljuk House – being directly descended from a Seljuk princess.[55] Thus, by branding his Ottoman rivals with the derogatory ethnic identifier, while simultaneously claiming descent from the last independent Muslim dynasty of Anatolia, Burhan al-Din was utilizing a modified version of the political language that had existed from at least the earlier parts of the fourteenth century. With the breaking of Timur on the scene, 'Tatar', 'Mongol' and 'Chagatay' were lumped together as the most dangerous adversaries of Muslim rulers of Asia Minor. All this, of course, resonates strongly with the stance that Bayezid had assumed against Timur.

Other similar echoes between the letters of Bayezid and Astarabadi's text can be found in those passages that purportedly recount the exchange of letters between Burhan al-Din and Timur. On one occasion, the sultan of Sivas had reportedly exclaimed:

> the ways and manners of Emir Timur, namely his deviation from the path of law and creed, his abandonment of the customs of religiosity and

> governance, his diligence in violating the honor of women and treacherously destroying free men, and his cruelty of heart and viciousness of nature ... are all well-known.[56]

Burhan al-Din's cataloguing of Timur's misdeeds is remarkably reminiscent of the charges brought by Bayezid against his Central Asian adversary. Moreover, much like Bayezid, Burhan al-Din too accused Timur of being the enemy of Muslims, against whom it was the duty of all rulers to lift up arms.[57] Finally, Astarabadi even tells us the manner in which the correspondence would take place when he reports that his patron set out to answer the letter of Timur 'clause by clause'.[58] The striking similarity of the manner of this exchange with the one between the Ottoman monarch and the world-conqueror analyzed above, in addition to the language employed by both parties and the general manipulation of a political discourse that hearkened back to the earlier parts of the fourteenth century – all these support the general statements made before that as Bayezid I began to present himself as the anti-Mongol ghazi he was drawing on a common Anatolian rhetoric of ghaza, which in turn cast the shadow of illegitimacy on his family.

So much for Astarabadi's *Feast and Fight*. The second contemporary text of the period, a late fourteenth-century Persian verse history of the Karamanid dynasty (also in central Anatolia) by a man named Yarijani, has not survived as such. However, in the early sixteenth century Ahmed Şikâri translated it into Turkish prose. The text had been composed for the Karamanid ruler 'Ala al-Din, not coincidentally a namesake of the Seljuk ruler 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad, from whom the Karamanids too had derived their legitimacy by claiming to have received a gown, a sword, a kettledrum and a flag from him.[59]

The Karamanids also told their origin myth as a single event – in their case, an attack led against a Christian fortress. The story was that while leading an army of Turcoman and Oğuz warriors, the Karamanids made their début by capturing the 'fort of Heraclius' (*Herakl kalası*).[60] However, this raid is not referred to as a ghaza. In fact, up to page 149 of the Koman edition of this book, where the Persian base-text of Yarijani must have ended,[61] the words ghaza/ghazi are used in only three or four episodes.[62] Nor does it seem that ghaza had only one meaning for the Karamanids, or that it was the only word to be used where it was applicable. On the one hand, the word merely seems to have denoted any battle in general, reflecting the older Arabic meaning. This is the sense on one occasion when a wise man prophesied that, for a Karamanid prince, 'mostly, his ghaza are to be with the caffre' (*ekser gazası kâfirle ola*),[63] suggesting that at other times his ghaza will be with Muslims. On another occasion, and this is significant, the word was used to indicate a Karamanid attack against the Tatars. This, of course, reflected the anti-Mongol potential of ghaza that had made someone like Aksarai nervous at the beginning of the century. 'They unsheathed their

blades, cried out 'God is great!' and rushed against the Tatar army ... From swallowing so much blood, the ghazis turned into drunk leopards', reads the text.[64]

It is difficult to say what sources the Turkish translator Şikâri used for composing the continuation of Yarijani's *Karamanid History*. The patron of the Persian original, namely 'Ala al-Din, died before Timur's invasion of Anatolia. Nevertheless, the decidedly older parts of this text confirmed the observations deduced from the correspondence of Bayezid I and Timur on the one hand, and 'Aziz al-Din Astarabadi's *Feast and Fight* on the other. All in all, the sparse evidence of the fourteenth century shows that although the Mongols had gradually lost their dominant presence in Anatolia, many of the minor princes there did use the rhetoric of the Mongol period in referring to or dealing with their rivals. These princes referred to each other, or rebels against them, as 'Tatars', 'Mongols' or even 'Turcoman'. Certainly not all Anatolian princes seem to have primarily identified themselves as ghazis, and where they did, as often as not they used the word to describe a fight against Mongols or Tatars. That is, of course, not to say that people who fought Christians did not style themselves with the same epithet, but only that one can detect a kind of continuity of political rhetoric (either necessitated by the sudden appearance on the scene of Timur as an Ilkhanid curse revisiting Asia Minor from the grave, or as the culmination of trends that had survived the effective fall of the Mongols in Rūm). In any event, this was the discursive context in which the image of the Ottoman rulers as ghazi sultans began to form.

It was, however, inevitable that, with resurrecting the representation of the ghazi king, the entire historiographical pattern in which it had occurred in Perso-Arabic literature would also resurface. Bayezid had been beaten by Timur, and the ineluctable conclusion of the 'triad of kings' pattern would immediately relegate him to the category of the depraved and debauched ruler losing to a band of rough warriors (as we saw, Mongols in Astarabadi and Ibn Bibi certainly filled that role, and Timur's equation with the Mongols would guarantee this characteristic as well). If the Ottomans cared for their public image, they had to counter this legacy. The dispute over Bayezid's drunkenness in Ottoman historiography goes back precisely to this. Those writing in the Ottoman court, namely Ahmedi and Shukrullah, made it a point to deny Bayezid's crapulousness and affirm his asceticism. Those writing later, from the ghazi/dervish milieu, took the opposite position.

The dissoluteness of Bayezid

That defeat in the hands of Timur would immediately recall in the minds of the (educated) contemporaries the pattern of the 'triad of kings' can be gathered from Astarabadi's words written at the very end of the fourteenth century – i.e., before the Battle of Ankara. Astarabadi explained the overthrow of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir by the Timurids as a direct result of his intoxication and negligence:

> Upon his arrival in Iraq, Sultan Ahmad adorned the assembly of pleasure in Baghdad, and sunk along with a handful of idiots in wine, song, and the bowstring ... He did not spend a moment managing his kingdom. [When the Timurids arrived] Sultan Ahmad had fallen in wine like a bubble ... completely negligent of the enemy's attack, he was busy with delight in Iraq ... drinking the ruby-red draught from morning till night.[65]

The story should by now be a perfectly familiar one – a debauched ruler, having lost himself in the stupor of wine, is completely surprised and easily beaten by an alert and rough warrior. In this particular case, Astarabadi wrote that Ahmad Jalayir managed to escape Baghdad before his capture.

Within a few years, we see Ottoman dynastic historians apparently responding to these very charges when they exonerate Sultan Bayezid of the exact same vices. Of course, the fact they had to deny it suggests that others had expressed it or at least thought it. Here is Ahmedi describing Bayezid's character shortly after the debacle of Ankara: 'For some time, [Bayzid] openly practiced pious asceticism (*zuhd*). Worshipping (*ṭā'at*) was his concern day and night. He never took in his hand a glass of wine. He never even listened to the harp or the flute'.[66] These statements only make sense as response to a charge which is not openly stated here. The ascetic, pious and abstinent monarch who avoids music is the exact opposite of what any victim of Timur would have been imagined by his contemporaries – namely, a depraved and festive prince floating drunkenly in negligent insouciance, losing his bearings before his enemy, and forgetting himself on the field of battle. In other words, Ahmedi's vindication of Bayezid's character is entirely discursive. It responds to the patterns of debauchery and decline in the cycle of states operative in the tradition of history-writing in the Middle Period of Islamic history. Needless to say, in another discursive context, that of lyrical poetry, the same Ahmedi makes seemingly contradictory statements regarding alcohol. In accordance with the requirements of lyrical poetry in this period, Ahmedi wrote plenty of short verses in praise of scandalous drunkenness, flaunting his inebriation in the face of the *fakih* (jurist) and *müezzin* (caller to prayer), even going so far as carrying on his pleasure into the holy month of Ramazan.[67] The point is that the accounts denying Bayezid's debaucheries are not necessarily a reflection on Bayezid, but have everything to do with the rules of composition and political conceptualization within the historiography of this age.

Accordingly, Shukrullah too, writing a good half a century later echoes Ahmedi almost verbatim. He writes:

> The ghazi sultan [Bayezid] began to exercise pious asceticism and devotion. Moreover, he abandoned anything done by former emirs and sultans that was contrary to holy law such as musical parties and debauchery (*lahv*) ... all these things being the devil's temptations.[68]

The rhetorical strategy of Ottoman court historians should be seen as more significant than a mere effort at whitewashing the legacy of Bayezid. The title 'ghazi', added by Shukrullah to the old monarch's royal designation, also goes towards the same purpose. The point was to resist at all cost the perceived collapse of the Ottoman dynasty into stage three of the triad of kings, the 'decline stage'. This was exactly what, at the end of the century, Ottoman chroniclers from the ghazi/dervish milieu felt at ease to voice. The anonymous chronicler, for example, put it famously: 'Until Vulk Oğlu's daughter came to him, Yıldırım Khan [Bayezid] did not know what drinking parties were. He did not drink and held no carouses. In the times of Osman, Orhan, and ghazi Murad, wine was not drunk'.[69] These concerns must have also existed in the early years of the fifteenth century (as evidenced by similar occurrences in Astarabadi).

What is equally interesting is that the same charges were hurled by the sons of Bayezid against each other during the civil war that ensued after their father's death. Thus, as Dimitris Kastritsis has recently pointed out, the same anonymous chronicles 'which reflect the views of the raiders of Rumili' give several examples of the drinking bouts of Bayezid's oldest son Süleyman while praising another son Musa (who had appealed to the raiders *akıncı* of the Balkans for support) as 'fair and generous to the army'.[70] So too was Mehmed I, the eventual winner of this fratricidal struggle, depicted as a simple soldier, whereas the dissoluteness of Süleyman was used as a justification for his downfall. Thus, in a text celebrating the feats of Mehmed, Süleyman is portrayed as carelessly busy in the baths imbibing spirits, while his luckier brother is quoted as saying, 'I am campaigning in Rumeli. I have a sword, a horse, and a truncheon, and they are enough for me! Whatever is won is shared with my companions!'[71]

There is no doubt that what is operating in this frantic rhetorical free-for-all is the discourse of 'decline' as a fundamental part of the cycle of the rise and fall of states. Bayezid and Timur had evoked the memory of the 'ghazi sultan' in their exchange, and thus the whole pattern of the 'triad of kings' had been unleashed. It was thus absolutely crucial for the Ottomans that if a prince from the dynasty was vanquished, at least another member of the House of Osman should be remembered as an upright and simple fighter – if not Bayezid himself (or if not convincingly), then Musa; if not Musa, then Mehmed. The decline stage was constantly passed on to a less fortunate member of the family, but the ethos of the simple warrior had to remain in the family if it was to have a future in politics. As we shall see in Chapter 7, it was Bayezid's grandson, Murad II, who successfully restarted a new phase in Ottoman historiography by personifying not merely a simple warrior, but a thriving and convincing ghazi sultan with broad appeal.

7 The ghazas of Sultan Murad II

Following the Battle of Ankara Timur returned to Samarqand to undertake a great campaign in China, but he died in 1405 and was succeeded by his son Shahrukh. At this point the Ottoman–Timurid relationship entered a second stage. This chapter will analyze this relationship, particularly as it related to ghaza and as it culminated in the reign of Murad II. Specifically, the argument will be made that Mehmed I (1402–21) acknowledged the overlordship of Shahrukh (as shown by his letters to Shahrukh and his coins recognizing Timurid suzerainty), and also tried to manipulate ghaza (against Christian powers as well as the 'Tatar/Timurids') to keep the Timurids at bay, all the while pursuing an aggressive policy of internal consolidation.[1] Yet Mehmed does not seem to have been able to present himself as or become a full-fledged ghazi king. At least, he was not remembered as such by later Ottoman historians. Instead, it was left to his son Murad II to fully recover the sovereignty of his house by embodying the role of ghazi king:[2] not merely a ruler who does ghaza, but also a king over other ghazis. Murad had thus started a new cycle in Ottoman history, signaling a second rise after the uncertainties of the interregnum. Murad's new ghazi 'persona' was a composite one, highly textual, and it comprised motifs and episodes drawn from translations and compilations of the histories of ghaza in Anatolia. In turn, this image found its way to Ottoman dynastic histories such as Aşıkpaşazade's *Tevarih-i Âl-i Osman*.

The choice for the old histories to be compiled and translated was by no means random. Murad was dealing with the dizzying political instability that had gripped every Ottoman ruler since the interregnum, and the texts selected were relevant to various volatile social milieus inside and outside the empire. The purpose of creating a royal image out of the literature of these problematic groups (namely, the raiders of Rumeli, the princes of inner Anatolia, and the Timurids) was to appropriate the language and the heroic ideals of each faction. By playing up the specific religious implication of ghaza (as opposed to mere raid), Murad was perhaps trying to unite behind his banner both the raiders of Rumeli and the princes of Anatolia (two of the sources of problems for the Ottoman state during the interregnum and the early years of Murad), keeping the Timurids (the third major

threat to the Ottoman) at bay, and confronting the various Christian powers in southeast Europe.

Mehmed and Sharukh

However, let's begin with the manipulation of ghaza by Mehmed I. The Ottoman monarch basically used ghaza in two ways. One was to derive legitimacy from it (aimed at the Timurids) by proclaiming its merits while consolidating Ottoman power in Anatolia, and another was to assert his defiance against the Timurids themselves. Now while Mehmed combined this dual posture of submissiveness/insolence, he did not try to present himself as a ghazi king – not at least according to the literary evidence of the fifteenth century. What he did do, though, was to set the stage for his son Murad. Below, Mehmed's particular utilization of ghaza will be analyzed, starting with his letters to Timur's successor Shahrukh.

The first feature that strikes a reader of the exchange between Mehmed I and Shahrukh is the sign of the power relationship between them. This is particularly remarkable in the form of address used by the two correspondents – especially as compared with the letters of Bayezid and Timur. While Shahrukh saluted Mehmed with short but polite headings, Mehmed poured out effusive and even servile greetings. For instance, Mehmed opened his rejoinder to Shahrukh's letter of admonishment dated February 1416,[3] scolding Mehmed's heavy-handed actions in Anatolia (against his brothers during the Ottoman civil war), by calling himself 'the sincere well-wisher of your rule who has always worn the ring of clientage in the earlobe of his soul'.[4] Wearing a ring in one's ear was a sign of servitude. This indeed was very far from Bayezid's vitriolic harangue against Timur. Five years later, when Shahrukh finally beat the army of Kara Yusuf (Timur's old nemesis in eastern Anatolia), and wrote a victory letter to Mehmed about it, the Ottoman monarch opened his response with words that were quite reminiscent of their first exchange. 'I present my servitude', he began, 'to his majesty ... with total submission and complete humility. Always know me as dutiful and compliant'.[5] It was clear that after the Battle of Ankara, Mehmed thought it best to tread cautiously when it came to dealing with Timur's son Shahrukh.

Mehmed's concern was closely tied to the fear of another invasion of Ottoman territories. His anxiety, however, was not expressed directly to Shahrukh, but to the rulers of eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus (be they friends or foes of the Timurids) who corresponded with the Ottoman monarch about the westward march of armies out of the gates of Samarqand. To Kara Yusuf he wrote, 'Apply all your effort so that you may find his majesty's [Shahrukh's] acceptance with your obedience. Do not let the fires of strife flare high.'[6] As his words fell on deaf ears, and the animosity between Kara Yusuf and Shahrukh intensified, Mehmed continued to voice his apprehension about the Timurid assault. 'Do not be negligent about the

situation of the Ilkhan [Shahrukh]. Do all you can to obey his majesty the Khaqan',[7] he wrote again to Kara Yusuf; and once more, 'we have learned of the attack of his majesty the Khaqan. May God bring about what is best.'[8]

All the same, there was another side to Mehmed's attitude towards the Timurids, and ghaza was part of this other façade. At one time, Mehmed seems to have thought that Shahrukh was using Kara Yusuf as an excuse for a second invasion of Asia Minor. He made a show of defiance to Sultan Khalil Allah, ruler of Shirvan (in the Caucasus) and ally of the Timurids, in the following words:

> If, as in older times, [Shahrukh] is using [my?] conciliation of Kara Yusuf and conflict with the Karamanids as an excuse to head out to this country, then the judgment 'belongs to God, the one, the irresistible'.[9] I will not show useless obsequiousness. While in the first encounter, they were the ones who gained from 'The Romans have been defeated in a land near by',[10] I hope that the victorious ghazis would this second time enjoy the good news of 'but having been defeated, [the Romans] will be victorious'.[11]

It is quite clear from these lines that Mehmed's obedience to Shahrukh went hand in hand with his fears of a second Timurid invasion of Anatolia. But there is an additional piece of information here which is of interest; we see that, for the first time, Mehmed reverts to a meaning of ghaza (fight against Tatars) that was used by his father Bayezid to intimidate Timur. This is a notable departure by Mehmed, who seems to have thought ghaza would conciliate Shahrukh and ensure his continued approval.

For example, when in 1416 Shahrukh implicated Mehmed in the murder of his brothers Süleyman, 'Isa, and Musa during the Ottoman civil war, Mehmed protested in his defense that all the rebellious Muslim princes of Anatolia distracted him from ghaza, and reminded Shahrukh that 'surely, getting busy with ghaza is more befitting and has priority over the suppression of these trouble-makers'.[12] Again, after Shahrukh defeated Kara Yusuf's army and wrote about it to Mehmed, Mehmed answered with congratulations and then set out to give an unsolicited update to Shahrukh about his intention of doing ghaza: 'now if he [Shahrukh] is solicitous of the affairs of high ranking ghazis', he wrote ingratiatingly, 'this well-wisher is heading out to do ghaza in Walachia'.[13] In fact, the only passage in Shahrukh's letter to Mehmed that shows any interest in Ottoman affairs is one in which he off-handedly warned Mehmed to return refugees from Kara Yusuf's camp should they seek sanctuary there. 'If he [Kara Yusuf's brother] should seek refuge there, capture him and send him to [my] court'.[14] In short, ghaza against Christians seemed to Mehmed as the means by which he might gain legitimacy in the eyes of Shahrukh, to which he might have recourse as an excuse for eliminating his Anatolian rivals, and through which he might avoid a Timurid onslaught against his domains. But, as the example above

shows, in his letter to Sultan Khalil Allah of Shirvan Mehmed hints at the other implication of ghaza, dating back to the earliest Mongol rule in Rūm, which signified the Ottoman defiance against the Mongols/Timurids. This was, of course, in line with the developments that were mapped out in the previous chapter in the Timur–Bayezid exchange.

One can detect traces of this dual defiant/conciliatory policy on material evidence. We know, for example, that Mehmed minted coins with Timur's name on them, suggesting his acknowledgment of Timurid mastery. However, there is other numismatic evidence that Mehmed simultaneously asserted his independence rather provocatively. On certain other coins Mehmed referred to himself as the 'great Sultan'.[15] Elsewhere – for example, on the Bayezid Paşa mosque of Amasya – an inscription dated to 1414 refers to the Ottoman monarch as 'The Great Sultan, mighty King of Kings, Sultan Mehmed son of the deceased Sultan Bayezid'.[16] Finally, an almanac of 1421 goes so far as to call Mehmed 'God's Caliph in the two worlds'.[17] Thus, at the time of his death, Mehmed had left to his descendants an Ottoman royal image that was at once audacious and submissive, and certainly not exclusively ghazi (if at all) – or if so, at least he was not remembered as a ghazi by later Ottoman authors. It was left to his son, Murad II, to finally capitalize on the potentials of ghaza as it had been refined from Bayezid to Mehmed, cast himself in this ideal role, break away from the Timurids, and launch an enterprise that culminated in raising the House of the Ottomans to the seat of the greatest imperial power in fifteenth-century Eurasia. In order to do this, however, Murad needed models to imitate, and these models were meant to present Murad in the language and heroic symbolism of the unruly raiders of Rumeli as well the unreliable emirs of Anatolia. At least two of the historical compositions produced during his reign provided the Ottoman monarch with just such models.

Translating the history books of ghaza

There was a great flurry of literary activity under Murad II, including both original compositions as well as a large number of translations.[18] Certain titles, dating to the earliest years of the monarch's reign, belong to the genre of 'advice for kings'. For example, if dated correctly,[19] Mercimek Ahmet's translation of that mainstay of Islamic political thought in the 'middle period', namely the *Kabusname*, took place during the first years of Murad's sovereignty at the special behest of the Ottoman monarch who had found an older Turkish translation too obscure.[20] More securely dated is the Turkish translation by Kasım b. Mahmud Karahisarlı of Najm al-Din Razi's (d. 1256 or 57) Persian treatise *Mirsad al-'ibad*. In his preface Karahisarlı says that he completed the book on Friday 16 January 1422,[21] and then found a suitable dedicatee in the person of Murad II.[22] Both these early works deal primarily with the issues of the need for justice by kings, which in return would require obedience by their subjects. Ghaza, where it does occur in these texts, is quite infrequent, although it is prescribed both as a defensive as well as an unprovoked offensive act.[23] These are the older texts, and they fit well in those early and unstable years of Murad's government when the relationship between ruler and subject was anything but predictable and secure. However, when we come to the compositions of the later years of Murad's reign, things change entirely.

There are three texts that roughly span the second half of Murad II's rule (1437–51): the anonymous *Battalname*, Yazıcıoğlu Ali's Turkish translation of *The Histories of the Seljuks of Rūm*, and the anonymous *Ghazas of Sultan Murad* (composed after Murad's death). A very close relationship exists among all three. The former two predated the latter, and were about the pre-Ottoman history of Anatolia. They provided the definition and model of the ghazi king, in which role Murad II was cast in the third text.

Both the *Battalname* and the *Histories of the Seljuks* were compilations. Yazıcıoğlu Ali's text is the largest surviving part of a historical trilogy.[24] The first part was a translation of a legendary history of the Central Asian tribe known as the Oğuz. Yazıcıoğlu Ali had taken this part from the universal history (completed in 1310–11) of Rashid al-Din, the vizier of the Mongol Ilkhans of Persia. The second part comprised a history of the greater Seljuks of Iraq and Iran written in 1226 by a man named al-Bundari. Finally, the third part was a Turkish rendering of a history of the Seljuks of Rūm by Ibn Bibi (written in 1280–81). That Yazıcıoğlu Ali composed his trilogy during Murad II's reign is confirmed by three laudatory references to the sultan scattered throughout the Turkish text.[25] The date of the translation, as was argued by Wittek, is the Hijri year 840 – i.e., some time between July 1436 and July 1437.[26]

Less is known about the composition of the *Battalname*. It narrates the adventures of the hero Battal Ghazi, the Arab warrior of the city of Malatya (Central Turkey, north of Syria), who constantly fought off or outsmarted his Byzantine antagonists. The text is written in Turkish prose and is preserved in a number of manuscripts, the earliest of which dates to 1436–37.[27] The probable oral paths of transmission and translation of Battal's stories (from an Arabic prototype text which seems to have existed as early as the twelfth century)[28] has led some scholars to claim that the composition of the Turkish text dates back to the twelfth or thirteenth century.[29] This conjecture notwithstanding, it would be safest to assume that the date of the earliest manuscript is also the date of the composition of the Turkish *Battalname* in *its present form*. As such, it will be probed for its role in the formation of Ottoman historiography, specifically with regard to the creation of the image of Murad II as the ghazi king.

Now, internal evidence suggests that the *Battalname* was as much a compilation as Yazıcıoğlu Ali's history. It is made up of several episodes that are joined together by an anonymous hand without heavy editorial interference. This is born out, for example, by radical stylistic shifts within the narrative. In Chapter 15, there occur three phrases that break the text at irregular

intervals. 'Conclusion of the twenty-second session',[30] reads one phrase. Several pages later follows 'the twenty-third session',[31] and then the number skips to 'the twenty-seventh session' near the end of that chapter.[32] This strange insertion is coupled with the introduction of three short passages in the first-person voice of Battal himself, one in Chapter 15 and two in Chapter 18.[33] Such divisions and quotations are completely absent from the other chapters.

Furthermore, a comparison with contemporary books of the same legendary heroic genre reinforces the sense of the *Battalname* as a collected text. There exists, for example, a Turkish heroic romance entitled the *Danişmendname*, written in 1360/61 by one Ârif Ali of Tokat (upper central Turkey),[34] celebrating the legendary deeds of an Anatolian lord contemporary with the early Seljuks. In contrast to the plot of the *Battalname*, the storyline of Ârif Ali's tale is continuous and spills from one chapter to another. Indeed, Ârif Ali often begins each new chapter by recapitulating the events enumerated in the previous one. In other words, he seems keen on reinforcing the idea of one unbroken narrative in his *Danişmendname*. This, of course, stands in sharp contrast to the translator/compiler/author of the *Battalname*, in whose text almost each chapter functions as an independent story. All this suggests that, like the *Histories of the Seljuks*, the 1437 *Battalname* too was a compilation of several independent versions of the legend.

The collection of the two texts coincided with a very significant period in Murad II's reign – namely, the years immediately preceding Murad's massive campaigns against Serbia and Hungary that lasted from 1438 to 1441.[35] This was the time also of the tenure of Fazlullah Paşa as grand vizier – a man who, according to the Byzantine historian Doukas, had started as keeper of the archives, became vizier through his ingenuity, and despised Christians with a fiery zeal (not an attribute that Doukas simply throws around for any Ottoman official). Doukas in fact credits him with devising Murad's Balkan adventure.[36] Thus, the creation of the *Battalname* and Yazıcıoğlu's *Histories of the Seljuks* took place in an atmosphere of rising war fever, for the prosecution of which at least Murad's most senior administrator seems to have been religiously motivated. But there is more to it than just that. For example, we might consider the journey undertaken in November 1437 by the Byzantine Emperor John VIII to Rome to discuss aid from the catholic powers, a move that led to the council of Florence and the proposed union between the two churches.[37] It is possible that the meetings in Rome reflected (or otherwise played into) the religious atmosphere preceding the invasion of Serbia by Murad. It is no surprise that the texts composed in this period (as opposed to the two early 'mirrors for princes' mentioned above) focus so much on ghaza and depict it in very similar ways. It is also likely that the books were meant to provide role models as well as a language for the creation and the propagation of the image of the ghazi king, a model that became more or less standardized and whose traces survive in a later text such the *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad*.

The *Battalname* in this case would have resonated with a popular dervish/ghazi/akıncı audience in the Balkans. That is not to say that the text was necessarily composed by an individual belonging to this social group. Rather, in its colloquial style, in its description of castle-raiding by heroes from amongst the ranks of the soldiers (not kings), and in its distrust of authority, the stories in this text would certainly have appealed to the people whose similar world-views are also expressed in such Ottoman chronicles as the Anonymous/Giese, and Aşıkpaşazade.

Now, the language of the *Battalname* certainly contributes prominently to the portrayal of Murad's later ghazas in the Balkans. However, what is of particular significance is that the parallels between the two texts occur not just at the level of the ghazis but also on the socially higher plateau of the ruling monarch in each case. In other words, whereas the actions of Ottoman soldiers in many ways recall the deeds of Battal himself, the character in the *Battalname* that resembles Murad most closely in a text like *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad* is the fictional caliph. The idea, of course, would have been to present to the frontier raiders and other ghazis an image of a king they could look up to, whom they could recognize in a form similar to what could be found in their own [oral] literature, but whose status was decidedly above theirs.

On the other hand, Yazıcıoğlu Ali's text belonged to a more literate tradition. The purpose of it, surely, among other things, was to stress the superiority of the Ottomans to the other beyliks as the legitimate heir of the Seljuks. Thus, forging a Seljuk/Oğuz genealogy for the House of Osman, superior to other principalities, speaks to this point.[38] This text was then directed towards the potential rivals and rebels from the various Anatolian emirates. But here too, just like in the *Battalname* and in harmony with the themes pertinent to the period under discussion, 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad is presented in the *Histories of the Seljuks* as, among other things, a sultan in charge of other ghazis. Thus it seems that ghaza could be used as a unifying theme in asserting Murad's superiority over Anatolian princes as well.

However, before demonstrating the textual parallels between the depictions of 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad and the heroes of the *Battalname* on the one hand and that of Murad II on the other, it is useful to pause and consider the historical background. We know that the raiders of Rumeli, the emirs of Anatolia, the Timurids, and the various Christian powers of the Balkans had each posed a serious threat to Ottoman rule since the interregnum.[39] The raiders and their officers had supported Musa Çelebi early in his reign against his brother Mehmed before abandoning him and joining Mehmed,[40] had taken part in the revolt of Şeyh Bedreddin against Mehmed,[41] and had then supported Mehmed's brother Mustafa instead of his son Murad.[42] The Anatolian rulers, such as the Germiyan- and Karamanoğlus, also were a major nuisance to both Mehmed I and Murad II.[43] Now, the experience of the siege of Constantinople by Murad in 1422 must have shown him the

potential that a massive religiously inspired campaign against a Christian power could have for unifying all these disparate and rebellious elements. The Byzantine chronicler Cananus writes that Murad's siege of the city had brought out Muslims 'from all the lands and nations' with the prospects of gaining wealth and also clearly in response to the religious potential of the attack which would, according to Murad, supposedly 'abolish the name of Christ'.[44]

The siege eventually failed (Murad was distracted by his brother's uprising in the east), but, perhaps looking back to this experience, what the Balkan campaign of 1438 could ideally achieve was to unite both the raiders and the Anatolian lords (i.e., two of the potential sources of problems for the Ottomans) using the language of ghaza against the Christian powers (the third potential source of Ottoman problem) and thereby simultaneously keeping the Timurids (the fourth threat) at bay. The image of Murad as ghazi sultan would include elements from the language and the heroic literature of each troublesome group: Seljuk history for the lords of inner Anatolia, popular ghazi lore for the raiders of the frontier, and highly ornate victory proclamations for the Timurids (more on this later).

Another possible motivation for the propagation of the image of Murad as the ghazi king might have been to cover up for a military policy that could potentially pose a challenge to some of these same rebellious groups – i.e., a policy by which the sultan would depend more and more on the 'slave' corps of the Janissaries (as opposed to, say, volunteers and raiders). Imber has suggested that by Murad's reign the number of the Janissaries in the Ottoman army had increased from a few hundred in the early years of the century to about 7,000.[45] We also know that the *azab* (infantry corps recruited from among the peasants and town-dwellers) were playing a role in Murad's wars by the 1440s.[46] The presence of the azab and Janissaries may not have seemed a problem to the raiders and the *timariots* (i.e., cavalry who received land in exchange for service) in the Balkans at the time, but by giving the umbrella appellation of ghazi to all of his soldiers, new or old, Murad might have been trying to avoid any possible misunderstanding on the part of the raiders and emphasize their unity in ghaza. After all, in the forthcoming decades the same progressively centralizing policies (relying more and more on the Janissaries and less on the raiders), under Mehmed II, Bayezid II and Selim I, certainly did lead to discontent on the part of the raiders, who in turn evoked the memory of ghaza in their protestations.[47]

Whether or not this was Murad's reasoning, or if so, regardless of whether the plan was successful or not politically, it is important to note what it signifies ontologically. Basically, it seems that, just like Babur and Mahmud of Ghazna, what it meant for Murad to become a ghazi sultan was to orient himself towards a number of possible literary definitions of ghaza, meshed together, and to try to present himself as the embodiment of the resulting image – and this would in turn be adopted by historians of the House of Osman. But let us begin with the analysis of *Battalname* and *Histories of the Seljuks*, and indicate their interrelations with texts describing the actions of Murad.

First and foremost, both compositions posited the conquest of Christian Rūm as the ultimate mandate of the ghazis. In the *Histories of the Seljuks*, those present at the death-bed speech of Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1157–92) open their oath of allegiance to his son and heir with these words:

> Our forefathers, by the command of the great sultan Malik Şah [r. 1072–92], gained their fame and name with the conquest of the kingdoms of Rūm, at the foot of the blessed stirrup of your grandfather Sultan Süleyman Şah the ghazi and under the shadow of his imperial parasol[48].

This speech is ended by a small piece of poetry, the last two lines of which praise ghazis who 'built [mosque]-altars and pulpits'.[49]

Likewise, in the *Battalname* one encounters the following refrain throughout the text wherein Battal declares that he will 'capture the land of Rūm, destroy its churches, and build mosques and [Muslim] schools in their place'.[50] It can be seen that, in both cases, the ghazis are portrayed not as mere raiders but as those who plan on annexing the kingdoms of Rūm from Christian hands and establishing there the symbols of Muslim rule (religious structures).

Moreover, it can be shown with regard to at least one of the two texts under investigation that an effort was made to update the contents in order to fit them with mid-fifteenth-century realities. Ibn Bibi's Persian history, upon which the third surviving part of Yazıcıoğlu Ali's Turkish text is based, has come down to us in one manuscript. By comparing the two, it can be seen that Yazıcıoğlu Ali had modernized, so to speak, the thirteenth-century world of Ibn Bibi, in both practical as well 'ideological' matters. So, for instance, Yazıcıoğlu Ali added words like *top* (cannon, cannon ball)[51] and *tüfek* (gun)[52] in battle scenes where the Persian text has *manjanīq* (siege engine)[53] or nothing at all.[54] Or again, Yazıcıoğlu Ali substituted the unit of currency, 'florin', in circulation at his time, for the *dīnār* of the Persian original. As for updates of ideological significance, Yazıcıoğlu Ali made a number of important alterations to the scenes that related to Seljuk campaigns against Christian kingdoms. Where, for example, the Persian text lists the constituents of an enemy alliance as 'Romans, Alamans, Kıpçaks, and Alans',[55] Yazıcıoğlu Ali catalogued 'Romans, Franks, Bulgars, Hungarians, and Alamans'.[56] Yazıcıoğlu Ali's list, of course, has a Balkan twist to it, and corresponds more closely to the register of adversaries of the Ottoman Empire during Murad II's reign. Again, where Ibn Bibi has an angry Seljuk sultan retort 'Rome! If you don't attack her, she will attack you',[57] using the verb 'ghaza' for attack, Yazıcıoğlu Ali simply deleted the saying, apparently because he did not want 'ghaza' to signify merely an 'attack' but wanted it applied strictly to

Muslim assaults against Christians. Finally (though many more examples can be given), where Ibn Bibi describes the activities of the Seljuk army within a spell of time with these words, 'all the time they would set out and sally to beat an army and build a minaret',[58] Yazıcıoğlu Ali echoed the refrain of Battal (given above) and wrote 'every once in a while they would beat an army, take a city, and *set up mosques and minarets in place of the church and the cross*' [italics added].[59] It should be clear by now that Yazıcıoğlu Ali was doing more than just looking at the past for defining a present. He was simultaneously *creating* the past, forcing it into the scheme for which he had referred to it in the first place, suppressing some things, substituting others, and supplying yet more. One can only conjecture that the compiler of the *Battalname* had not neglected this circular dialogue with history either.

So, then, the fact is that during the reign of Murad II there took place a concerted effort to select, compile, create and, and as we shall see, appropriate and imitate particular versions of the history of Rūm. A number of texts were chosen to be assembled and translated into Turkish. These texts not only helped to define ghaza by portraying famous ghazis of old; they also offered an ultimate goal for the ghazis – namely, the complete conquest of the Christian kingdoms of Rūm. It is time to see concretely how this program manifested itself in the presentation of the Ottoman Sultan Murad II as the ghazi king. It will be shown that whoever composed the anonymous *Ghazas of Sultan Murad* (sometime between 1451 and 1453, or possibly as late as 1460)[60] had been greatly influenced by the *Battalname* but also had some faint echoes of the *Histories of the Seljuks of Rūm* in his memory.

Colin Imber has drawn attention to the *Ghazas* for its remarkable details and its awareness of events outside the Ottoman border, 'such as the council of Florence in 1439'.[61] One reason for the uniqueness of the *Ghazas* is rooted in the fact that the anonymous author modeled his composition after such books as the *Battalname*. For one, both texts provide full accounts of Muslim *and* Christian camps, and not just the Muslim side. This is unusual in itself. Moreover, in certain instances there exists such affinity between the content of the portrayal of the Christian side in the two texts that one can infer that the more recent text has directly borrowed from the older one. Good examples can be found by comparing the following passage from the *Battalname* with the *Ghazas* and the scene of the very council of Florence that has impressed Imber so much. First, the *Battalname*:

> There was a [Christian] vizier named [Mancayil], who said, 'My lord, some thing came to my mind. With your permission I may tell you.' The Caesar said, 'Speak up. Let's hear it!' He said, 'All the provinces that are attached to you should close their mountain passes, and troops should be posted ... You might, Messiah willing, catch [Battal] and get your due from him.' The Caesar was pleased with this plan, and he sent off a letter to his son [Ş]amun.[62]

Here is the scene of the council of Florence in the *Gazavat*:

> Rim-Papa [the Pope in Rome] said, 'My son, Tekvur, what is it that you want? Come on and speak. Let's hear.' Tekvur said, 'O, master of our faith, the son of Osman has not been content to fit into Anatolia and Bursa, and has now trespassed into Rumeli, capturing Sofia, Filibe, Edirne, and other provinces and kingdoms ... I beg of you to admonish all the Christian peoples and kings, saying that let us come regarding these sons of Osman and let us rid ourselves of them' ... Rim-Papa immediately ordered the king of Hungry, the king named Despot, and others to be invited ... having written letters.[63]

In both passages, the lesser Christian (Mancayil/Tekvur) informs the greater one (Caesar/Pope) about the need to get back at the Muslim arch-antagonist (Battal/Murad), by appealing to a number of collaborators who are informed of the matter by letters. It appears that in his depiction of what he knew about events outside the Ottoman border, the author of the *Gazavat* had made use of the *Battalname*.

This reliance extended further from the realm of political matters to religious ones as well, for both texts imagined the Christians' religious beliefs in the same way. Not only did both stories have their Christian characters call on Jesus regularly, they also often invoked something called 'The Fire of Light' or *Nar-ı Nur*. This deity, which may stand for the Holy Spirit in the *Battalname*,[64] is a common embodiment of some evil, and features recurrently in Persian and Turkish popular romances near-contemporary to our text.[65] However, it is completely absent from Ottoman historical writings of the fifteenth century (Aşıkpaşazade, Uruc and the anonymous). This suggests that the author of the *Gazavat* had discovered this pseudo-deity from reading the version of these romances available to him in his time – the *Battalname*. This claim is further supported when one takes note of the similarity of the language of the two texts when they mention this *Nar-ı Nur*. Thus, for example, in a scene where a Christian warrior turns his back on the Muslims in the *Battalname*, his commander chides him in these words: 'Hey Sunbat, you have spilled *Nar-ı Nur*'s face-water' (meaning, you have shamed him; *Nar-ı Nurun yüz suyu döktün*).[66] Similarly, after Christian soldiers take a bad thrashing from the Ottomans in the *Gazavat*, their leader Yanko rebukes them by saying, 'You have spilled *Nar-ı Nur*'s face-water on the ground (*Nar-ı Nurun yüz suyu yere döktünüz*)', echoing the *Battalname* almost verbatim.

Other verbal parallels abound. 'The Caesar scattered letters abroad (*nameler perakende kıldı*) to Firingistan, Cathay, Khotan, and Samarqand ... and invited them (*davet eyledi*).'[67] Similarly, in the scene of the council of Florence in the *Gazavat*, 'The Pope having invited (*davet edip*) the king of Hungry, the king named Despot, and others, ... and having written letters, scattered them abroad (*nameler yazılıp ... perakende edip*).'[68]

Elsewhere, in a moment of some desperation during a battle between the Muslims and the army of the Caesar, Battal blinds his chief nemesis, 'the accursed wizard' (*cazu melun*), by shooting an arrow into his eye: '[Battal] took his bow to hand and discharged an arrow ... It landed on his right eye (*yayın eline aldı bir ok pertab etti ... sağ gözüne dokundu*)'.[69] Likewise in the *Gazavat*, during the desperate moments of the Battle of Varna, a ghazi blinds the 'cursed Yanko' (*yanko la'in*), the chief nemesis in the Christian army, by shooting an arrow into his eye: 'A ghazi took bow and arrow to hand ... and discharged ... It came right into his eye (*bir gazi eline ok yay alıp ... pertab etti ... gözüne rast gelip*)'.[70]

Or again, the refrain of Battal, also echoed in the *Histories of Seljuks*, about conquering Rūm and replacing churches with mosques, finds its parallel in the *Gazavat* too. Tekvur, for instance, complains to the Pope, 'They have conquered kingdoms and provinces, ruined and devastated our churches, cleared out the idols and bells of some of our churches and have set up minarets in their stead. Some, they have turned into mosques, some, into [Muslim] schools'.[71] It should be noted that, as stated above, while Battal talks of mosques and schools, and Yazıcıoğlu Ali writes mosques and minarets, the author of the *Gazavat* has all three, apparently combining the best of both texts.

But perhaps the most suggestive point of convergence, thematically and linguistically, is the characterization of Murad II in the *Gazavat* and his being modeled after the caliph (actually a couple of them, but unnamed) in the *Battalname*. We see the language of the two texts merge together when the caliph and Murad speak, when their actions are described, or both. For example, Murad, on the eve of the fight at Varna, in his pre-battle speech, says to his ghazis, 'Those of us who kill will be ghazis. Those of us who die will be martyrs (*Öldürenlerimiz gazi, ve ölenlerimiz şehid*)'.[72] So too the caliph, as he encouraged his soldiers before the ghaza against the Caesar, said 'Those of you who die will be martyrs. Those of you who kill will be ghazis (*Öleneniz şehid, öldüreneniz gazi*)'.[73]

As for the convergence of the language of the two texts in describing the actions of Murad and the caliph, the following can be cited as an example. In the *Gazavat*, the envoys of the Karamanid principality arrive at Murad's court but are coolly received: '[Murad] did not show favor and did not look at their faces (*iltifat etmeyip, yüzlerine bakmayıp*)'.[74] In the *Battalname*, Battal goes to the caliph but does not find a warm reception. 'The Caliph did not show favor and did not look at his face (*ilitifat etmedi, yüzüne bakmadı*)'.[75]

Finally, there are instances where the language expressing both the speech and the activities of the caliph, are echoed in the description of Murad's actions. So, in the *Battalname*, during the battle against the accursed wizard, the caffres break the army of Islam and start pushing towards the caliph. The caliph gets down from his horse, prays, and the battle turns:

> The caliph saw that the army of Islam was being broken, and so he quickly got down from his horse,... rubbed his blessed white beard on the ground, and cried saying, 'O God, let there be again power and might to the army of Islam from you (*Halife gördü ki İslam leşkeri sınır, tiz attan aşağa indi ... ol mubarek ak sakalın yere sürdü, ağladı eyyitti: Ey bar huzaya, bu dafa dahi İslam leşkerine kuvvet kudret senden olsun*)'.[76]

This passage apparently lies behind the scene in the *Gazavat*, during the Battle of Varna, when the two wings of the Ottoman army were beaten and the Christians started making their way to the center where Murad stood. He too got down from his horse and prayed. The Battle turned. 'When the King of the World [Murad] saw this situation, he immediately let himself down from his horse, laid his face on the ground,... and prayed to the owner of power and might, the everlasting God (*Padişah-i âlem bu hâli görüp, heman kendiyi attan aşağı bırakıp, yüzünü yere urup ... kuvvet ve kudret ısı la-yezal Allaha niyaz edip*)'.[77]

The subtle differences between the two versions can be reconciled by consulting a similar scene in Yazıcıoğlu Ali's history where the Emir Hisamuddin Çoban, who is described as an exemplary ghazi, is sent off to fight the Kıpçak near the Caspian Sea[78] and, on the morning of the decisive encounter, gets off his horse and prays to God for victory.[79] This action is described as 'he laid his face on the dirt' (*yüzün[ü] toprağa urup*). Add this to the words in the *Battalname*, 'he rubbed his blessed white beard on the ground' (*ol mubarek ak sakalın yere sürdü*), and we get the description of the *Gazavat* 'he laid his face on the ground' (*yüzünü yere urup*). Or again, the verb used for describing the call to God by the hero is 'to cry' (*ağlamak*) in *Battalname*, but 'to pray' (*niyaz etmek/kılmak*) in the *Gazavat* and Yazıcıoğlu Ali.[80] Finally, while the caliph in the *Battalname* prays in prose, the hero in the other two texts prays in rhyming couplets.[81]

So, it seems that the author of the *Gazavat* had the relevant passage of the *Battalname* in mind when he wrote this scene, but there were also echoes of a similar setting in Yazıcıoğlu Ali's history, and they accounted for his shifts away from the *Battalname*. Furthermore, modeling Murad II after the caliph had an important historiographical significance. The point was that Murad was not simply a ghazi, but a ghazi sultan in charge of other ghazis. Clearly, Murad did not want any ghazi in his realm to commit a *prima inter pares* fallacy with regards to the Ottoman ruler. Certain additions to the *Histories of the Seljuks* reinforce this hypothesis, and perhaps even provide a direct model. For in this text, the great protagonist 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad appears as exactly the kind of ruler for whom other ghazis fight. He is, moreover, presented as a protector of ghazis. For instance, Yazıcıoğlu Ali invented the following sentence and added it to his translation of Ibn Bibi: '['Ala al-Din] said, "the pensions (*timarleri*) and income of the regions of Rūm and Armenia are the rightful dues of ghazis. Those who will not give the rightful dues of those who deserve it will be at fault on judgment day with

regards to the rules of Islam"'.[82] Both 'Ala al-Din in this passage, and the caliph in the *Battalname*, are portrayed as the master of other ghazis, partaking in the merit of their wars, perhaps, but superior to them and protective of their rights. This is interesting, for it seems that while other Anatolian rulers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had attempted to derive legitimacy by connecting their ancestors to the Seljuk Sultan 'Ala al-Din, Murad II was trying to present himself as not just a distant kinsman but as an actual second 'Ala al-Din, as a kind of 'reincarnation' of the great monarch of old Anatolia.[83]

In sum, it was necessary to translate these two texts and then use them for representing Murad II as the ideal ghazi sultan (or sultan of ghazis). The latent result of this presentation can be seen in a text such as the *Gazavat*. Now, the fact that the *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad* has survived in a single manuscript does not mean that its portrayal of Murad is still not based on some sort of official or at least standardized version. As we shall see, the way in which the *Gazavat* describes Murad's actions resembles very closely particular passages in a text like Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle. I think it would be reasonable to infer, therefore, that there existed other texts like the *Gazavat*, including victory proclamations, and these represent a systematic portrayal of the king. In other words, both Aşıkpaşazade's history and the *Gazavat* reflect a common set of sources – namely, an organized presentation of Murad.

To create this 'official' image, Murad and his contemporaries had to find a proper definition of ghaza as a concept, and this was discovered in the narratives of the great ghazi rulers of old, each representing the heroic ideals of potentially hostile social groups with whom the Ottomans had to contend. By embodying these heroic ideals, and by playing on the religious sentiment of his challengers, Murad began his invasion of the Balkans as a ghaza. Perhaps he wanted to unite the sources of distraction and instability in his realm behind him – though, as several Karamanid attacks on Bursa demonstrate, the success of the project was far from satisfactory. In the next section, by analyzing the correspondence of Murad II and the Timurids, it will be shown how Murad drew on the language of slightly different literature in portraying himself as the ghazi king to Shahrukh in Samarqand for a very similar purpose.

The sultan of ghazis, Murad II in his letters

An undated set of correspondence between Murad II and Shahrukh opened with a letter by Shahrukh in which he told Murad that since the accounts of Shahrukh's world-conquest were sent to Anatolia, and since the news of Murad's ghazas were often forwarded by others to Samarqand, it would be better if Murad mailed Shahrukh directly and informed the Timurid sultan of his affairs.[84] This letter of Shahrukh is followed by one from Murad detailing the Ottoman victory over the Hungarians. This text is a testimony to Murad's political shrewdness. His letter opened with a highly elaborate greeting, running longer and written in a more ornate mixture of prose and

verse than anything Bayezid I and Mehmed I had ever put together for their Timurid counterparts. However, this complicated phraseology masks a kind of self-assertion by Murad. On the one hand, he showed himself capable of composing the most complicated of Persian prose styles. Moreover, Murad did not refer to himself in the self-humiliating terms of his father. Murad's letter runs as follows:

> The soul-comforting great address ... that appeared like the blessed hidden night-traveler from the summit of the constellation of auspiciousness, and the generous, joyous letter ... that like the holy bird of praiseworthy virtue who flaps her wings in flight from the pinnacle of the high mountain that is the court of the prosperous house ... of the king who has the power of fate,... God's shadow on the two worlds, sultan of sultans,... arrived at a favorable time and propitious hour;... [this bird then] nested ... in the ventricles of my heart, and as she found the house empty of the rancor of enemies, she immediately began warbling about the kindnesses ... of that royal monarch.[85]

The main line of this letter – i.e., the arrival Shahrukh's message, which is likened to the landing of a bird – is extracted from a maze of rhetoric only for the sake of relative clarity in this translation. These extra lines of Persian and Arabic verse and prose show off the literary abilities of the Ottoman court, but, more subtly, they serve as a decoy to distract the reader from the fact that Murad did not belittle himself to Shahrukh as Mehmed I used to. There is no talk of 'servitude' here, no more 'total submission and complete humility', no more 'wearing the ring of clientage' like a slave. The bewildering rhetoric actually veils this omission. Murad II was cautiously asserting a new sense of confidence, both cultural as well as political, in the face of the old masters in Samarqand.

That this newfound confidence should be expressed in a victory proclamation is no coincidence. Murad II's successes in the Balkans had made him a ghazi in the post-Ankara sense. In other words, Murad's was the first such accomplishment since the Bayezid–Timur dialogue had focused ghaza as a source of dynastic legitimacy and identity as well as a protective measure against the Timurids for the Ottoman house. It was in this sense that Murad II had become the first Ottoman ghazi sultan. This would simultaneously accord with Shahrukh's own publicized image – that of a ruler with progressively Islamic credentials expressed in part through the patronage of the fine arts.

The influence of historical literature on Murad's language should not be seen as solely borrowing. Similar to the case of Babur or Mahmud of Ghazna, the creation of a 'ghazi' discourse for describing Murad's campaign would sooner or later affect his own perception of these events, which would in turn be reinforced by his further readings. For example, Murad seems to have enjoyed giving pre-battle speeches in order to reinvigorate the waning courage of his soldiers. To Shahrukh, he wrote:

> I sallied forth to the kingdom of the Hungarian people, and I reached the banks of the Danube which is like a shore-less sea. [All the commanders] were thinking in the depths of their souls that our crossing would be a difficult and taxing attempt. They were hiding in their hearts reservations about the battle. So I took my cue from the verse 'bolster the believers. I will instill terror in the hearts of the caffres',[86] and I comforted each one, promising them favors,... then we crossed.[87]

It can be seen that Murad II had a penchant for giving pre-battle orations that roused his soldiers from fear. This would make Murad relate to the more epic portrayal of such speeches in the *Battalname*. Afterwards, he is described performing such functions in the *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad* using the language of the *Battalname*.

Now, as for the phrasal development of the ghazi discourse (really a continuation from Mehmed I's time), one can detect the influence of rhetoric from earlier texts (be they the earlier exchange between the Ottomans and the Timurids, or texts such as the *Selcukname*) upon later ones.[88] Again, it is of course from this point that these terms make their way into the language of Ottoman historical sources – particularly the *Gazavat*. Murad's portrayal of the Anatolian enemies of the Ottomans serves as a good example.

As seen above, Mehmed I had already used the tactic of portraying his competitors in Anatolia (for instance, the Karamanids and his brothers) as pests who hindered his ghaza. Murad intensified this practice. He called the Karamanids 'the wicked vagrant Karamanid rabble, who are truly bandits against God's religion and enemies of the faithful',[89] and who 'every time our royal victorious venture gets three stations out of Edirne (to do ghaza) ... they immediately begin their rebellion and rudeness, and do such things that force us to return and punish them.'[90] This is, of course, how the Karamanids are depicted in the *Gazavat*. But what is curious is the use of the term 'bandit' (*rāh'zan*) for the Karamanids, which is an echo of Timur and Shahrukh's denigration of Kara Yusuf, whom they had consistently called 'bandit'[91] (both Persian '*rāh'zan*' and the Arabic '*qaṭṭā' al-ṭarīq*'). Another example of this verbal appropriation is the use of the word 'abject caffres' (*kuffār-i khaksār*), which is picked up by Murad from, it seems, Timur's letter quoted above, and then used in Murad's correspondence.[92] This term in turn is one of the most common ways of referring to Balkan Christians in the *Gazavat*.

Another example is where Murad complained about internal discord in Ottoman territories, which he feared would (like the period after the Battle of Ankara) allow Christian powers to begin a re-conquest and transformation of Ottoman territories. '[The Christian enemies] turned nearly one hundred districts and villages ... into the abode of infidelity, and converted countless mosques and minarets of [Muslim] sermon into the temple of monks and the mosque of idols and crosses.'[93] The idea of Muslim infighting causing Christian empowerment was common enough in the earlier letters of Bayezid and Timur. What is also of interest, however, is the last sentence quoted – i.e., the conversion of mosques to churches. This is, of course, the reverse of the kind of alteration we saw in the Turkish translation of the *Selcukname* by Yazıcıoğlu Ali. We can see how here, for the first time, the phrase enters the language of Murad's letters, and thence (or simultaneously) makes its way into the Ottoman historical writings – namely, the *Gazavat*. In short, in Muard II's victory proclamations, one can already detect his historical eye – his referring to the beginnings of the formulation of ghaza in historical literature, be it Ottoman–Timurid letters, Seljuk historiography or, later, popular epics such as the *Battalname*. The language of these texts was appropriated by Murad in his own letters, and these in turn were used in the Ottoman histories of the second half of the fifteenth century.

It should be fairly clear by now why the translation project of Murad II was necessary in the first place. Once ghaza had gained political importance for the Ottomans vis-à-vis the Timurids, models were needed that could be drawn upon for the depiction of the sultans in the role of the ghazi king. In other words, a certain standardized royal definition had to be formed and propagated. In the case of his self-presentation directed towards the Timurids, Murad drew on texts already familiar to them – namely, the former correspondence of his father and grandfather with their counterparts in the east.

In fact, this same development can be traced through Ottoman dynastic histories as well. Portions of four such texts will be used. The first, the *İskendername* by Ahmedi, which was written (or at least revised) immediately after Bayezid's death and Timur's withdrawal. Ahmedi propagated ghaza as a means of legitimacy and identity for the Ottoman prince Süleyman (an eventual loser to Mehmed I in the civil war), and encouraged his patron to use ghaza to keep the Tatars off his back and unite the fragmented territories of his father. In Aşıkpaşazade (writing in the 1480s, but based on memories of a half a century before), one can see the exact period in which his highly personal and anecdotal mode of narration gave way to the kind of language we see in the *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad*. Put otherwise, we see where the 'official' portrayal of Murad as ghazi king percolates into popular literature. Last, the trajectory of the ghazi king in two different chronicles of the House of Osman, one encomiastic (Shukrullah's *Bihjat al-Tavarikh*) and the other critical (anonymous *Tevarih Âl-i Osman*), will be traced. Thus, in this final section, it will become apparent how reliably Ottoman dynastic histories reflect the movement of the ghazi discourse as charted above.

The ghazi sultan and Ottoman dynastic histories

The oldest independently surviving specimen of Ottoman historiography is a poem by Ahmedi (1334–1413) called *İskendername* – the book of Alexander. At the very end of this metrical narrative, Ahmedi added 334

rhyming couplets detailing the reigns of the Ottoman sultans up to one of Bayezid I's sons, Süleyman. Ahmedi certainly wrote of the early Ottomans as ghazis, and thus provided some twentieth-century scholars with evidence that the driving essence of the Ottoman Empire was holy war.[94] It is generally agreed nowadays that Ahmedi had begun his work under Bayezid, and then revised it for Süleyman after Bayezid's death.[95]

Before he wrote his final section on the Ottomans, Ahmedi listed the Mongols. In the transition from the Mongols to the Ottomans, Ahmedi berated the Mongol kings he had just catalogued.

> Some of them were caffres, some, men of cruelty. They had more tyranny than kindness. What was the justice of those Mongol sultans like? Listen as I explain. No one has mentioned that Genghis Khan openly oppressed the people. They did oppression using the law, without bloodying their hands ... Now, let us tell a story that is free of blemish [i.e., Ottoman history]. Since the men of cruelty [i.e., the Mongols] have been referred to, let us also make mention of the men of justice [i.e., the Ottomans]. Let us talk about those lords, who from the first to the last, were both Muslims and just. Their main work is fighting caffres.[96]

Ahmedi's position was curiously similar to Bayezid's in his letters to Timur. The Mongols (of whose descent Timur had boasted) were contrasted with the Ottomans. While Ilkhanid supremacy was morally suspect and oppressive towards Muslims (as was Timur's, according to Bayezid), the Ottomans were genuine Muslims, fair to their own fellow believers, and aggressive towards caffres. Why did Ahmedi feel the need to set the Ottomans against the Mongols? Other clues in the texts shed more light on this question.

Next, Ahmedi moved to list the Ottoman monarchs one by one. He began with Ertuğrul. As we saw above, Bayezid had presented Ertuğrul as a prince of high lineage who had come to the aid of the Seljuk Sultan 'Ala al-Din (Kayqubad) and defeated the caffre Mongols for him. In exchange, according to Bayezid, Sultan 'Ala al-Din (Kayqubad) gave Ertuğrul's son Osman the march-lordship of the frontiers. But Ahmedi's account differs slightly from this – slightly but significantly. It runs as follows:

> One day, the auspicious Sultan 'Ala al-Din asked, 'What is the situation of the ghazis and martyrs?' He knew that ghaza was good work. The people/army of a ghazi is free of anxiety and jumbled confusion (*gazi olanın haşrı bi-teşviş olur*) ... [From the Seljuk capital Konya] an army charged against the abode of infidelity in order to attack their countries and kill the caffres. There, Ertuğrul fought many battles. Naturally, he became famous in the world ... The King ['Ala al-Din] stayed in that region for a while, until the caffre-business was finished off. Now the Tatars had been at peace with ['Ala al-Din], since they had heard he had gone off against the caffres. But once they got the chance, they started attacking the countries ... ['Ala al-Din] fell into anxiety and jumbled confusion ... The King gave those areas to Ertuğrul, so that he might repel the caffres every year and month.[97]

This account of Ertuğrul is somewhat at odds with Bayezid's version. Ertuğrul certainly helps 'Ala al-Din beat the caffres, and is therefore rewarded with the lordship of the frontier areas. However, Ahmedi's Ertuğrul does not attack caffre Tatars, but caffres of the frontier (Christians). In fact, it is exactly through this ghaza that he manages to keep the unpredictable and destructive Tatars in check for a while. Also worth noting is Ahmedi's belief that ghaza can solve internal confusion and anxiety (*teşviş*, which is caused by the Tatars). Both of these positions sound curiously akin to the way that Mehmed I (Bayezid's other son, and brother to Ahmedi's patron Süleyman) had interpreted ghaza. One might recall that in Mehmed's letters to Shahrukh, the Ottoman prince kept promising ghaza against the Christians to placate the master in Samarqand, as well as excuse his heavy-handed policy against his brothers in uniting the former territories of Bayezid.

So then, in the *İskendername*, completed in the period following the Battle of Ankara, Ahmedi was communicating to Süleyman that he should avoid conducting ghaza against the Tatars, but direct it against the Christians in order to keep the Tatars off his back (without fully trusting them), and thereby unite the confused successor-princedoms of Bayezid's sons and competitors. Again, this is well in line with the policy of Mehmed I as extracted from his letters to Shahrukh.

However, if this were so, why would Ahmedi not express his opinion openly? The key to this lies at the end of the work. The following lines reinforce the hypothesis that by 'Mongols', Ahmedi had Timur in mind, of whom he did not, however, wish to speak. He wrote:

> In the midst of all this, Timur marched on to Rūm. The country became full of strife, fear, and weakness. Timur had no justice, but was full of oppression and tyranny. It was certainly horrible, and even mentioning it is horrible. It would be better not to speak of it.[98]

Timur here is characterized by injustice, oppression and tyranny, as were the Mongols in the opening of the Ottoman section of Ahmedi's work. His invasion also leads to discord and fear – in other words, the jumbled confusion alluded to above. It is, of course, against such discord and confusion that Ahmedi had recommended ghaza to Süleyman.

All this should give weight to the argument that Ahmedi's *İskendername* reflects the same attitude toward ghaza as the letters of Mehmed I – that ghaza was a source of identity and legitimacy for the dynasty vis-à-vis the Timurids, and that ghaza was a good excuse for overcoming disunity. Also

worth remembering is that Ahmedi seems to have been the first historian of the Ottomans to substitute the word 'ghaza' for *'akın'*. The more common word for raiding in general, and raiding Christians in particular, seems to have been *akmak*, meaning literally 'to flow'. As Imber, Fodor and Lowry have pointed out, Ahmedi had written the famous lines, 'The helpers of religion flowed (*akdılar*) against the caffres. Therefore they called *"gaza"*, *"akın"*'.[99] The use of *akın/akıncı* (one who does *akın*) alongside or in place of ghaza/ghazi continued well into the fifteenth century, not just in the Ottoman chronicles[100] (and we will deal with these below) but also in Byzantine sources of the same period.[101] That is not, of course, to say that the word ghazi or ghaza was not used at all by anyone before Ahmedi. Rather, we begin to see the formation of a courtly definition of ghaza by the House of Osman with specific political implications both internally as well as externally. The introduction of ghaza, at least in court circles, can now be better appreciated in light of the anxieties regarding Ottoman–Timurid relations. As the fifteenth century progressed, the Ottoman court definition of ghaza slowly pervaded the lower echelons of society and historiography. The word was certainly not new, but the particular political implications of it were. The best medium for testing this movement is the history of Aşıkpaşazade.

Aşıkpaşazade composed his history circa 1485, when he was a very old man. He had been an active soldier for much of the fifteenth century, serving, among others, in the campaigns of Murad II in the Balkans.[102] Thus, while he had depended on older written sources for relating the rise of the House of Osman up to the reign of Bayezi I,[103] much of his writing on Murad II actually derived from his own personal memoirs. A close comparison of the earlier and later parts of Murad's reign in Aşıkpaşazade's history shows the exact point at which Murad's specific presentation of the Ottoman sultan as the ideal ghazi king was popularized. While in the earlier parts of the reign of Murad Aşıkpaşazade uses the word akın for ghaza and allows Murad to play only a small and distant role in the events, by the end of this section a language of description very similar to that of the *Gazavat* dominates Aşıkpaşazade's text. This not a mere change of vocabulary. Aşıkpaşazade may very well have seen himself as a ghazi in a very general way (fighting for Islam) while serving in or alongside the specific army unit of the irregular raiders (akıncı). However, by the time of the wars during the last years of Murad's reign, Aşıkpaşazade was describing – and perhaps even perceiving – the state of affairs through an official lens, succumbing to the language prescribed, it seems, by the court itself.

Three passages will be analyzed below. The first forms section 112 of Friedrich Giese's edition of the chronicle, and relates the events surrounding the unsuccessful siege of Belgrade.[104] The highly personal tone of the author, the relative distance of Murad and the use of akın/akıncı in place of or alongside of ghaza/ghazi are worth noting.

> Sultan Murad surveyed the country of Hungary, and then he realized that Belgrade was the gateway to Hungary. He resolved to open this gate. He mustered the army of Islam, marched against Belgrade, and camped before it. While they pretended to lay siege to the fortress, they however crossed over the Sava and suddenly rushed upon (*akın saldılar*) Biline. The ghazis came back so rich with booty, that they would give a fine slave for a boot. Well, I was there too and bought a boy of six or seven years of age for one hundred silver coins. Mind you, in those days one would pay a servant a hundred and fifty silver coins to look after a horse. In any event, on that campaign I obtained seven male and female slaves from the akıncı. It had come to the point where, on the way back, there were more prisoners than soldiers.
>
> To make it brief, it was said that since Islam had appeared and ghazis had done ghaza, there had never been a ghaza like this. This is so transparent that repeating all that was said would be stating the obvious. Now, one day during that campaign, I went to Sultan Murad, and he deigned to grant me a slave. I said, 'My glorious sultan, I need both a horse in order to bring this slave home and some money for the road.' He awarded me five thousand silver coins and two horses. So I ended up returning to Edirne from that campaign with nine [?] slaves and four horses. In Edirne I sold the slaves for two or three hundred silver coins each. Thus I earned a handsome keep and praised the sultan and prayed for him.[105]

It is clear from the passage that the narrative is as much about Aşıkpaşazade as about Murad. It is the author's own adventures that we read about; the failure of the siege is overshadowed by the personal gain of the soldiers. Murad himself only measures into the account as a distant figure who makes decisions about grand plans, and then as the person who rewards his soldiers. Also worth noting is the use of the words akın/akıncı for or alongside of ghaza/ghazi. The two sets of words are either synonymous and interchangeable, or the latter set is more broad and comprehends the former as a technical desgination within the army structure.

The next section, numbered 113, continues this trend. Aşıkpaşazade recalled the campaigns that followed the siege of Belgrade as a highly personal event. Characters are featured in the text as much for their involvement with the author as for the role they might have played in a grander scheme. It reads as follows:

> When summer came, Sultan Murad camped before Semendire. The son of Vulk made fast his castles, and then crossed over into Hungary. The Sultan commanded, 'Devastate the country of Laz, destroy its castles, and take the population captive.' And as soon as this order was given, an excursion was undertaken and the country of Laz was devastated and destroyed. The ghazis came back so rich with booty that a four-year old boy would be sold at Üsküb for twenty silver coins.

Now, when Ishak Bey returned from Mecca, Semendire had not yet been taken. At that time I also returned from Mecca along with Ishak Bey. A messenger came to Ishak Bey from the sultan with the following order: 'Go up against Niğeobre and lay siege to it.' He attached to us the *Sancak* [province] of Germiyan as companions. In those days, the Sancak-bey [ruler] of Germiyan was Osman Çelebi, son of Umur Bey, son of Temürtaş – who was later martyred at the Battle of Varna.

Now, I had come along with Ishak Bey to Üsküb and taken part in all sorts of adventures. On one occasion, I had gone on a raid together with Paşa Bey, the son of the Ishak Bey, and Kılıççı Doğan. One day, a ruckus was heard amidst the soldiers. Ishak Bey immediately jumped on his horse, and all the ghazis mounted too. We saw a troop of caffres suddenly emerge before us, and behind them came still many more troops. The caffre infantry was in the front and their cavalry behind them. They came up on us swiftly in a thick black cloud.

On this side, the Muslim ghazis cried out, 'God is great', and attacked the enemy infantrymen with their horses. As they did this, the enemy showered them with arrows. But the ghazis did not heed the arrows and kept pushing forward. The caffre cavalry in the back did not stand its ground and started fleeing – trampling down the caffre infantrymen under the hooves of the horses. They created such a chaos that as the horses of the ghazis moved through the caffre forces, the horses had no room to step through but had to tread on the corpses. Then Ishak Bey yelled out, 'Ahoy, ghazis, that's enough killing for now. Start taking prisoners.'

By God, I myself took five of the caffres captive, apart from the ones I had killed. I brought them to Üsküb and sold all five for nine hundred silver coins. To make it brief, Semendire was captured in that year. The *kul* [the sultan's soldiers] were stationed in its fortresses, and judges were appointed to its towns. They started performing the Friday prayer in Semendire, and all the rulers of the Laz country were Muslims thenceforth – with God's help (year 1438).[106]

The narration is somewhat confused, as might be expected from an eyewitness account.[107] Nevertheless, the style and content are very much in harmony with section 112 quoted above. The scene opens with Murad acting as a distant strategist. His will is made known through a command, obviously from the perspective of a soldier who remembered royal decrees as a recipient. Thereafter, the focus switches to Aşıkpaşazade's own affairs and the account becomes highly personal. The rewards of the battle, the booty collected, the sale of the slaves – all these are as important to the story as the capture of the region and the establishment of Muslim suzerainty.

This pattern is common in the earlier accounts of Murad II's reign in Aşıkpaşazade's history. However, in the description of Murad's final battle

in the text (the second Battle of Kosovo, 1448) there occurs a drastic change. Although Aşıkpaşazade was a participant in this campaign too, the account he gave of it bears a remarkable resemblance to the language and style of the *Gazavat*. The progression of events, the themes emphasized and a number of other topoi all suggest that Aşıkpaşazade combined and gave prominence to a more official version of the Battle of Kosovo. This version was presumably a text very similar to and of the same genre of the *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad*. In other words, it is precisely near the end of Murad's reign – say, during the Battle of Varna and after – that the image of the Ottoman sultan as the ideal ghazi king in charge of other ghazis became solidified and was popularized. The relevant section is numbered 120, and reads as follows (one should bear in mind the peculiar features of the *Gazavat* and its dependence on the *Battalname* or the *Histories of the Seljuks*):

After Sultan Murad conquered Akçahısar in Albania, he gave permission to the army to return to Edirne. But then news arrived that a great Hungarian force had passed Belgrade and was marching forward. It seemed that they had called a mass mobilization. The sultan said, 'This devilry is the work of the son of Vulk. Now quickly, send spies to investigate and find out who are the princes of these caffres who are moving forward here.' They sent Martoloz Doğan. He went, looked around, asked for information, made discoveries, and returned. He was questioned and reported thus, 'One of them is the prince of the Poles, another the prince of the Czech, another the son of the prince of the Lük, and one the prince of the Szeklers. All of them are high princes in the country of Hungary. Each one has the rank of a king. But the source of all this mischief is Yanko Hunyad. It is he who leads the way and brings them here.'

When Sultan Murad found out about this, he took refuge with God and marched straight out of Sofia. He gathered the soldiers from every province. People had even come from the Karamanid domain to do ghaza on that campaign. When the entire army had gathered, they presented arms. After the sultan had seen the men-at-arms ride by, he wished to see the Karamanid company too. Someone said to their captain 'Why don't you bring your soldiers and men-at-arms and show them?' So he paraded his men-at-arms. What the son of Karaman had put together and sent was a pack of loud-mouthed horse-thieves with wooden saddles, torn furs, patched up coats, coarse turbans, stirrups made with belts, and sword pendants made of cords.

Sultan Murad turned to the son of Akçaylı and said, 'Thank goodness I do not need their help. But all the same, it is a good thing that he sent them here. My soldiers needed something to make fun of. This is what these fellows are sent for. I expect nothing from them and do not want their help. I just want them not to cause any mischief or do any devilry but behave well.'

> Afterwards, Sultan Murad expressed his intention of ghaza against his enemies, and marching onwards, arrived at the leaden church. There he heard the news that the caffres had moved towards Kosovo. So the sultan left that place and marched for Kosovo. On Friday at sunrise, he encountered the caffres. When the sultan saw the caffre army, he got down from his horse immediately and performed two sets of emergency prayers. He lifted his hands and entreated the Lord Most High, rubbed his face on the earth, and said, 'O my God, protect this handful of Muslims and give them your assistance. For the sake of Muhammad, the dear pride of both worlds, protect them. Do not humiliate them at the hands of the caffres for the sake of my sins.'
>
> When he finished his prayer and supplication, he restated his intention for ghaza, got back on his horse, and charged the caffres. That day, they fought an incredibly intense battle, and captured several caffre companies. They fought all night long. On Saturday there was again an enormous battle. Many heroic lords risked their lives and became martyrs. Of the caffres too, many princes fell and died, and many were taken alive. Yanko, the prince of the Lük, and his son got away. The prince of the Szeklers fell, and the prince of the Poles was taken prisoner. The latter did not make himself known however, and after being sold a couple of times, he finally escaped. The rest of the caffres were either killed or captured. I myself killed a caffre, and Sultan Murad gave me and Derviş Akbıyık a horse each.[108]

The first thing to note about this outstanding passage is the fact that the story is no longer about Aşıkpaşazade himself, but Murad. While Murad is the hero of the tale from the beginning to the near end, Aşıkpaşazade only surfaces in the last few lines, recounting, as usual, his gain from the battle. Also worth noting is how the Murad of this last and personal section fulfills the same role as the Murad of sections 112 and 113. He is there merely to grant a boon to his soldiers. However, the bulk of the story is clearly based on a very different style of narrative.

This main storyline has much in common with the *Gazavat*. For instance, the blame for the war is placed on the enemy, who has mobilized a multinational alliance. Moreover, the members of this alliance are catalogued by nations, as were the enemy of Murad at Varna. Also, the story deviates from the battle to disparage the Karamanids – something quite alien to Aşıkpaşazade's practice in the first two sections. The Karamanids are called 'horse-thieves' and are portrayed as bandits – just as they had been in Murad's letter to Shahrukh quoted above. Then there is Murad's getting off from his horse, rubbing his face in the dirt, and calling out to God before the battle. We have seen this topos in the *Histories of the Seljuks of Rum* and the *Battalname*, and of course it features in the *Gazavat-i Sultan Murad*. Finally, the words akın/akıncı have completely disappeared from the passage. There should remain no doubt as to the reason for this sudden shift

in Aşıkpaşazade's narrative style. By the end of Murad II's reign the Ottoman sultan had managed to assume the image of the ideal ghazi king, and, by propagating this image throughout the empire, had monopolized ghaza, overshadowing other definitions which may have existed.

A look at two other dynastic histories, one clearly from a courtly origin and the other critical of the Ottoman House, reflect this broad pattern. Both Shukrullah's panegyric *Bihjat al-Tavarikh* (completed around 1460) as well as the much more critical anonymous *Tevarih-i Âl-i Osman* (written a few decades later) depict the trajectory of the House of Osman as one of an early rise due to ghaza, a decline and absence of ghaza during the reigns of Bayezid and his sons, and return to ghaza under Murad II. In Shukrullah, the Ottoman rulers are continuously referred to as *sulṭān-i ghāzī* or *pādishāh-i ghāzī*. But suddenly, with the accession of Bayezid, no campaign of the Ottomans is considered ghaza. Mehmed I is several times described as intending to perform it, but somehow circumstances prevent him. Either he is distracted by rebellion in Anatolia,[109] or the Christian powers are intimidated by him and beg for peace before hostilities begin.[110] It is with the accession of Murad II to the throne of ghazis, so we are told, that ghaza magically returns to the narrative of the Ottoman dynasty:

> He performed five ghazas. First, he conquered Salonika, second, was his ghaza at the pass of Izladi, third, the ghaza of Varna, fourth, the ghaza of Germe, and fifth, the ghaza of Kosovo ... In no other age has there been as many good and pious deeds as during the blessed reign of this religion-nurturing monarch – deeds such as ghazas, conquests of the lands of infidelity, seizure of castles and fortresses from apostates, the building of schools, mosques, hospices, pulpits, etc.[111]

Shukrullah's assertion that ghaza was the business of the Ottomans from their earliest days, that it disappeared during the reigns of Bayezid and the civil war that followed his death, and that it was resurrected gloriously by Murad II clearly reflects a courtly view whose propagation of the image of the ghazi king has been analyzed above. What is remarkable, however, is that this same view is adopted by an Ottoman chronicler whose work was manifestly critical of the dynasty. This was the anonymous author of the *Histories of the House of Osman* writing probably in the last two decades of the fifteenth century. The anonymous chronicler clearly reflects the viewpoint of frontier warriors. Many of his earlier anecdotes regarding the beginnings of Ottoman history have to do as much with princes who did not ascend the throne (such as Süleyman Paşa) or lesser-known ghazis and dervishes who undertook various conquests in the Balkans. The author was vehemently opposed to the centralizing tendencies of the Ottomans that were marginalizing many individuals from the raider/dervish social background.[112]

When he retold the narrative of the rise of the House of Osman, the anonymous author arranged his material cyclically with sequences of good

behavior by kings bringing about prosperity, followed by decline due to moral dissolution of the monarch, further recovery and, (in his own days) a foreboding of further decline. Yet, in spite of this difference of agenda from Shukrullah, the anonymous author too employed a similar approach to the ghazas of the Ottomans. The earliest years of the dynasty were marked by conquests by brave ghazis. The Ottoman monarchs took part in and encouraged this behavior. Immediately following the reign of Bayezid I, however, ghaza disappears from the text; instead, only the words akın/akıncı are used, signifying the dynasty's loss of divine mandate. It is precisely at this period, too, that moral and financial corruption begins to grip the House of Osman, and internal strife follows suit. However, finally, in the reign of Murad, the author reintroduces the words ghaza and ghazi in his text, signifying, of course the return of the religious mandate of the Ottomans.[113] That two authors with opposing political agendas (one to eulogize the dynasty, the other to criticize at times) should see the reign of Murad II as the return of ghaza to the sons of Osman is evidence of the effectiveness of that monarch's propaganda. Murad had been able to embody the role of the ghazi sultan for a wide group of his subjects, regardless of their social or political backgrounds.

Murad did this by referring to histories that portrayed ghaza in concrete examples, each corresponding to the ideals and language of various social and geographical groups within his kingdom that could potentially challenge the sovereignty of the Ottoman House. These examples in turn became role models for Murad to imitate, expressed again in a language familiar to the various groups whose particular interests had recommended the original texts in the first place. The resulting image of Murad, as recorded in various later compositions, including proclamations issued in his name, finally made its way to a broader public in the dynastic histories of the Ottoman dynasty. Murad II had managed to fashion himself into a ghazi king who fights caffres, but also serves as protector and master of lesser ghazis. Not only did Murad forge the Oğuz genealogy for the House of Osman for propaganda purposes; he also assumed and defined in a specific way the role of ghazi sultan for the Ottomans.

Conclusion

In the foregoing chapters, the process of formation, transmission, revival and imitation of an image (that of the ghazi king) has been mapped out. Mahmud of Ghazna and his court historians created the most popular version of this image in the Middle Period of Islamic history, and this image in turn gave legitimacy to a soldier of low birth who had taken over a kingdom by sheer power. Where the image was revived, often other soldiers on the run were in need of justifying their position. Furthermore, the texts created under Mahmud proved greatly popular. Many students of rhetoric, for example, seem to have turned to 'Utbi for learning the art of prose style. This double combination of a recurrent social condition for military leaders, and the availability of panegyrists who had access to Ghaznavid texts, played a great role in perpetuating the image of the ghazi king. Of course, the ghazi king was not a stand-alone image; it formed part of a royal triad of images corresponding to the youth, maturity and decline of dynasties.

The repeated depiction of soldiers and princes in these images should not be viewed only as the recurrence of mere literary tropes. In almost every case studied here, the relationship between the prince and the man of letters was an intimate one. Some of these monarchs were themselves highly educated and seem to have read histories. This is particularly true of later rulers, such as Babur. Others were accompanied by poets and panegyrists well-versed in these accounts – Mahmud of Ghazna and Murad II are perhaps the best examples. Yet others would be constantly reminded of the stories of ghaza, by secretaries who followed them on their campaigns. The Khwarazmshah Jalal al-Din might have been such a monarch. The history of ghaza as outlined in the preceding chapters is the same as the history of the texts of ghaza. The sudden emphasis on ghazis by authors, be they princes or bureaucrats, signals the emergence of a debate over legitimacy. As they fought to monopolize the title of 'ghazi' for themselves, princes and warriors would have actually had to wage ghaza.

The information about famous ghazis spread via the transmission of textual records. By reading these texts or hearing them, Muslim princes would model themselves after these heroic forerunners. What seems like an endless variation on a theme to a modern scholar would actually be the assurance of possibility to

a pre-modern soldier-prince. He did not need to ascertain the truth of a text he had read. Perhaps he never bothered to question the correspondence between the text and the physical reality that it purported to describe. The ghazi-to-be could re-enact the stories he had read, or perhaps even script his own actions before a campaign. In either case, the correspondence between text and *hors-texte*, although perhaps originally beyond proof, would actualize in the person of the imitator.

This is essentially a 'Don Quixote' argument. Later princes would read the heroic literature of an earlier age, and would try to outdo their predecessors or actually become them. But this quixotic self-perception is only ridiculous to a modern mind that may both feel physically removed from the world in which these transformation would take place (although plenty of examples from daily life have been given to argue otherwise), and also are heir to an intellectual tradition that fundamentally distinguishes between the knowing subject and an outside object. Don Quixote appears as a caricature because he was not allowed to speak for himself. Babur, Murad and Mahmud may seem cynical or delusional, because we see them from the same distance whence Cervantes gazed at Don Quixote. Babur's memoirs and Mahmud's letters are actually the voice of Don Quixote as he saw himself.

When, in 1637, René Descartes wrote his *Discourse on Method*, he denigrated the study of history as unscientific because of the impossibility of ascertaining the truth of the records of the past. His fourth objection in the second discourse reads as follows:

> Moreover, fables make us think that many things are possible when they are not, and even the most accurate histories, although they do not change or exaggerate the significance of things in order to make them more worthy of being read about, omit the less important or significant details. Thus what remains does not really appears as it really is, *and those who regulate their lives by examples drawn from history are in danger of falling into the extravagancies of the knight errants of romantic novels, and of meditating hyperbolical deeds.*
>
> (italics added)

Although many scholars have supposed that these lines very likely refer to Cervantes' Don Quixote (a French translation, completed by the 1620s, had been of immense success in France),[1] what is particularly significant is that these lines began the process by which it was no longer possible for professional historians of the modern age to read works of history credulously.[2] But this has had the unfortunate result of misunderstanding a pre-modern approach to history; one not by scholars behind desks, but by scholar-princes on horseback who read history not for establishing the correspondence of textual records with how the past really was but rather for inspiration to imitate the extravagances of ancient heroes. Should this book contribute to the blurring of the lines between texts and reality, then it will have served its purpose adequately.

Notes

Introduction

1 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Jabbar al-'Utbi, *al-Yamini fi Sharh Akhbar al-Sultan Yamin al-Dawlah wa-Amin al-Millah Mahmud al-Ghaznawi*, ed. I. D. al-Thamiri, Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 2004, p. 14. Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Manini, *Sharh al-Yamini al-Musamma bi-al-Fath al-Wahbi 'ala Tarikh Abi Nasr al-*'Utbi, Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Wahabiyah, 1869, vol. 1, p. 40.
2 Hanafi law is one of the four major legal traditions in Sunni Islam.
3 'Utbi, *al-Yamini*, pp. 31–32. Manini, *al-Sharh*, vol. 1, pp. 77–79.
4 Babur, *Baburnama*, ed. W. H. Thackston, Cambridge, MA: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1993, p. 139a.
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11 V. V. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, trans. T. Minorsky, London: Luzac, 1968, pp. 214–215.
12 Ibid., pp. 287, 290–291.
13 W. Haig, *The Cambridge History of India, Volume 3: Turks and Afghans*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928, pp. 26–27.
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15 C. E. Bosworth, 'Mahmud', *The Encyclopedia of Islam 2*, Leiden: Brill, 1991, vol. 6, p. 65.
16 J. Paul *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vormongolischer Zeit*, Stuttgart: In Kommission bei F. Steiner, 1996, especially pp. 103–117; as well as his 'The Histories of Samarcand', *Studia Iranica*, 1993, vol. 22, pp. 69–92.
17 D. G. Tor *Violent Order: The Ayyars in Medieval Islamic World*, Würzburg: Orient-Instituts Istanbul, 2007, especially Chapters 7 and 8.
18 That is to say, as ghaza specifically. For an analysis of the campaigns as a whole,

the classic work remains M. Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931.
19 W. Haig, 'Mahmud', *The Encyclopedia of Islam 1*, Leiden: Brill, 1931, p. 135.
20 C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 29–60; C. Heywood 'Wittek and the Austrian Tradition', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1988, no. 1, pp. 7–25; C. Heywood, 'Boundless Dreams of the Levant: Paul Wittek, the *George-Kreis*, and the Writing of Ottoman History', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1989, no. 1, pp. 30–50; H. Lowry *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006.
21 P. Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*, London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1938, p. 4.
22 F. Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. and ed. Gary Leiser, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992, pp. 11–27.
23 R. P. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*, Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Indiana University, 1983, p. 2.
24 C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 60–117.
25 R. P. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans*, p. 110.
26 Ibid., p. 6.
27 S. Vryonis, 'Evidence of Human Sacrifice Among the Early Ottomans', *Journal of Asian History*, 1971, vol. 5, p. 144.
28 J. V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002, p. 11.
29 Ibid.
30 H. Lowry, *Nature*, pp. 46–47.
31 For example, in 'The Ottoman Dynastic Myth', *Turcica*, 1987, vol. 19, pp. 7–27.
32 C. Imber, 'The Legend of Osman Gazi' in E. Zachariadou (ed.) *The Ottoman Emirate, 1300–1389: Halcyon Days in Crete*, Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1993, p. 74.
33 C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 65.
34 For a recent attempt, see C. Imber 'What does *ghazi* actually mean?', in Ç. Balım-Harding and C. Imber (eds), *The Balance of Truth: Essays in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Lewis*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000, pp. 165–178.
35 L. Darling, 'Contested Territory: Ottoman Holy War in Comparative Context', *Studia Islamica*, 2000, vol. 91, p. 157.
36 M. Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980.
37 T. El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Harun al-Rashid and the Narrative of the 'Abbasid Caliphate*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
38 J. S. Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.
39 C. F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

1 How Babur became a ghazi

1 Such as Hayden White, Paul Riccour, Kermode and Barthes. See D. Carr, 'Narrative and the real world', in G. Roberts (ed.), *The History and Narrative Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 145.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., p. 150.
4 Ibid.

5 M. Gelven, *A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989, p. 89.
6 In the next chapter, it will be seen that much of Babur's writings in India were particularly relevant to his South Asian context, and it would have been quite meaningless for him to have written in Turkish (a language not broadly understood in India), without also acting out according to new exigencies.
7 Babur, *Baburnama*, ed. W. H. Thackston, Cambridge: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1993, pp. 75a–76a.
8 S. Dale, *The Garden of Eight Paradises*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, p. 44.
9 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 128a.
10 Ibid., pp. 134b–135b, abridged.
11 S. M. Edwardes, *Mughal Rule in India*, London: Oxford University Press, 1930, pp. 136–137.
12 S. Dale, *The Garden*, p. 42.
13 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 137b.
14 Ibid., p. 138a.
15 Ibid., p. 139a.
16 Ibid.
17 In this, Babur resembles many of his contemporaries. Early modern travelers interpreted the places they visited through a filter of literature. Columbus, for example, carried on his voyage copies of the travel books of Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville. See, for example S. Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, and T. Todorv's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. R. Howard, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.
18 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 145a.
19 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Jabbar al-'Utbi, *al-Yamini fi Sharh Akhbar al-Sultan Yamin al-Dawlah wa-Amin al-Millah Mahmud al-Ghaznawi*, ed. I. D. al-Thamiri, Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 2004, pp. 350–352. Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Manini, *Sharh al-Yamini al-Musamma bi-al-Fath al-Wahbi 'ala Tarikh Abi Nasr al-'Utbi*, Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Wahabiyah, 1869, vol. 2, pp. 153–155.
20 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 249a.
21 Ibid., p. 261a.
22 Ibid., p. 261b.
23 Ibid., p. 263b.
24 Ibid., p. 266a.
25 Ibid., p. 267a.
26 Ibid., p. 267b.
27 Ibid., p. 268b.
28 Ibid., pp. 269a–270a, abridged.
29 Ibid., p. 272a.
30 Ibid., p. 294b.
31 Ibid., p. 304b.
32 Ibid., p. 311b.
33 Ibid., p. 304a.
34 Ibid., p. 312a.
35 Ibid., p. 313b.
36 Ibid., pp. 314b–315a.
37 H. Lamb, *Babur, the Tiger: First of the Great Moguls*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961, p. 276.
38 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 324b.
39 Ibid., pp. 324b–325a.
40 Ibid., p. 325a. Translation is mine.

41 See A. Rahman, *Zahir-uddin Muhammad Babur: A Numismatic Study*, Karachi: Ama ur Rahman with Syed Graphics, 2005, p. 24.
42 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996, p. 97.
43 Ibid., p. 99.
44 Ibid., p. 100.
45 Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi, *Shahnamah*, ed. Dabir Siyaqi, Tehran: Ibn Sina, 1956, lines 3916–3924.
46 Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, ed. A. H. Habibi, Kabul: Anjuman-i Tarikh-i Afghanistan, 1963, vol. 1, pp. 290, 292.
47 For a detailed discussion of Babur's language from a grammatical point of view, see C. Schönig, *Finite Prädikationen und Textstruktur im Babur-name: (Haiderabad-Kodex)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997.
48 Translated by C. Imber, *The Crusade of Varna, 1443–45*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006, pp. 41–107.
49 C. Imber, 'The Legend of Osman Gazi', in E. Zachariadou (ed.), *The Ottoman Emirate, 1300–1389: Halcyon Days in Crete*, Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1993, p. 3.
50 Anonymous, *Gazavat-ı Sultan Murad b. Mehemmed Han: İzladi ve Varna Savaşları (1443–1444) Üzerinde Anonim Gazavatname*, eds H. İnalcık and M. Oğuz, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978, ff. 55a–56b.
51 Ibid., p. 57b.
52 Ibid., p. 57b.
53 Ibid., pp. 57b–58a.
54 Ibid., p. 56b, abridged. He gives a similar speech on p. 55a.
55 Ibid., p. 56a.
56 Ibid., p. 51a–51b.
57 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 129a.
58 Ibid., p. 264a.
59 Ibid., p. 364a.
60 Ibid., p. 311a.
61 Ibid., p. 314a.
62 C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1650: The Structure of Power*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 269.
63 Juzjani, *Tabaqat*, vol. 1, p. 263.
64 Sharaf al-Din Yazdi, *Zafarnamah*, ed. M. 'Abbasi, Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1957, vol. 2, pp. 314–315.

2 Disclaiming Tamerlane's inheritance, and the rise of the Mughal Empire

1 See, for example, J. F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 8. D. Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989, argues for Akbar as the 'real' founder.
2 J. F. Richards, *Mughal Empire*, p. 9. C. B. Asher and C. Talbot, *India Before Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 117–118.
3 See for example, B. S. Hall and K. R. DeVries, 'The military revolution revisited', *Technology and Culture*, 1990, vol. 31, pp. 500–507.
4 S. Dale, *The Garden of Eight Paradises*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, p. 329.
5 I. Prasad, *The Life and Times of Humayun*, Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1956, p. 71.
6 J. Woods, 'Timurid historiography', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 1987, vol. 46, p. 82.

7 Ibid., p. 85.
8 T. W. Lentz and G. D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989, p. 63.
9 Babur, *Baburnama*, ed. W. H. Thackston, Cambridge, MA: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1993, pp. 45b–46.
10 T. W. Lentz and G. D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989, p. 12.
11 Ibid., pp. 62, 103 and 113, respectively.
12 Ibid., pp. 163, 125 and 110, respectively.
13 For Herat see M. Szuppe, *Entre Timourides, Uzbeks et Safavides: questions d'histoire politique et sociale de Hérat dans la première moitié du XVIe siècle*, Paris: Association pour l'avancement des études iraniennes, 1992.
14 Ibid., pp. 275 and 290, respectively.
15 Recent works on Bihzad include *Kamal al-Din Bihzad: Majmu'ah-i Maqalat-i Hamayish-i Bayn al-Millali*, Tihran: Farhangistan-i Hunar, 2005; M. A. Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzad of Herat (1465–1535)*, Paris: Flammarion, 2004; and E. Bahari, *Bihzad, Master of Persian Painting*, New York, NY: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1996.
16 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 147b.
17 I. Habib, 'Timur in the political tradition and historiography of Mughal India', in M. Szuppe (ed.), *L'Heritage timouride: Iran, Asie centrale, Inde XVe–XVIIIe siècles*, Tashkent: [IFEAC]; Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1997, pp. 297–312.
18 Most recently, the Safavids are discussed in A. J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
19 Haydar Mirza, *Tarikh-i Rashidi: Tarikh-i Khavanin-i Mughulistan, Matn-i Farsi*, ed. W. M. Thackston, Cambridge, MA: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1996, pp. 120a–120b.
20 Slightly abridged. Haydar Mirza, *Tarikh-i Rashidi*, p. 121a.
21 Fazl Allah ibn Ruzbahan Khunji, *Mihman'namah-i Bukhara: Tarikh-i Padishahi-i Muhammad Shaybani*, ed. M. Sutudah, Tehran: Bungah-i Tajumah va Nashr-i Kitab, 1976, p. 45.
22 *Tarikh-i Mahmud Shahi*, ed. Satish Chandra Misra, Barudah: Shu'bah-i Tarikh, Maharajah Sayajira'u Yunivarsiti, 1988, pp. 170–171.
23 Ibid., p. 170.
24 Ibid., p. 208.
25 See C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Contruction of the Ottoman State*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, especially pp. 96–97 and further references.
26 K. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 318–319.
27 'Abd Allah, *Tarikh-i Daudi*, 'Aligarh: Shu'bah-i Tarikh-i Muslim Yunivarsiti, 1954, pp. 10–11.
28 Ibid., pp. 35–37.
29 Or Osman Gazi and Bahlul Lodi for that matter.
30 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 120a, slightly abridged.
31 Ibid., pp. 152a, 160a, 161b, 203a and 203b.
32 Ibid., pp. 126a and 152a.
33 Ibid., pp. 194a and 194b.
34 There was, however, a Timurid precedence, namely Sultan Husayn Bayqara, entitled 'Abu al-ghazi', who himself went from the raiding phase to that of the great king. See S. Dale, *The Garden*, p. 99.

35 Dale, for example, ascribes Babur's drinking to his being an 'unapologetic individualist' (p. 37) or his belonging to an aristocratic culture (p. 144).
36 Babur, pp. 164b and 166b.
37 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 252a.
38 Gandamak (on the Surkhrud river west of Jalalabad), Sultanpur (further east near the confluence of Surkhrud and the Kabul River), Khush Gumbad (south-east of today's Jalalabad, inching closer to the Khyber Pass), and finally Ali Masjid (just passing the Khyber pass into India, west of today's Peshawar).
39 Babur, *Baburnama*, pp. 252b–253a.
40 Ibid., pp. 294a and 294b.
41 S. Digby 'Dreams and Reminiscences of Datu Sarvani: A Sixteenth-Century Indo-Afghan Soldier', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1964, vol. 1, pp. 62–63.
42 Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 264b.
43 Ibid., p. 268a.
44 Ibid., p. 312b.
45 Ibid., p. 317a.
46 Khvurshah ibn Qubad al-Husayni, *Tarikh-i Qutbi, Niz Musamma bih Tarikh-i Ilchi-i Nizam Shah*,Delhi, Jami'ah Milliyah Islamiyah, 1965, p. 557.
47 Ibid., p. 568.
48 Ibid., p. 590.
49 Ibid., p. 591.
50 See Beveridge's argument on page 79 in the introduction of Gulbadan Begam, *The History of Humayun*, ed. and trans. by A. S. Beveridge, London: Printed and published under the patronage of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1902.
51 Gulbadan, *History*, p. 2b.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., p. 3b.
54 Ibid., p. 5b.
55 Ibid., p. 8b.
56 Ibid., p. 9a.
57 Ibid., p. 12b.
58 Hamid ibn Fazl Allah Jamali, *Siyar al-'Arifin*, Urdu trans. by M. A. Qadiri, Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1976, pp. 195–196 (Urdu)/pp. 61–62 (Persian text).
59 Ibid. The Persian text is quoted in Qadiri's introduction p. 62, abridged.
60 Ibid., p. 64.
61 S. Digby, 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537): the personality and attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi', *Medieval India, a Miscellany*, Delhi: Asia Publishing House, vol. 3, 1975, pp. 10–11.
62 Ibid., pp. 11 and 31.
63 Ibid., p. 32.
64 Ibid., pp. 33–34.
65 Ibid., p. 35.
66 S. Digby, 'Dreams', p. 65.
67 See T. Todorv's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. R. Howard, Norman, Oklahoma City, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.

3 The origins of the ghazi king

1 That is in today's Uzbekistan.
2 Ibn Zafir, ed. W. L. Treadwell, quoted in W. L. Treadwell, 'The Political History of the Samanid State', D. Phil. Dissertation, Oxford University 1991, unpublished, p. 336. See also his 'The account of the Samanid dynasty in Ibn Zafir al-Azdi's Akhbar al-duwal al-munqati'a', *Iran (Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies)*, 2005, no. 43, pp. 135–171.
3 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Jabbar al-'Utbi, *al-Yamini fi Sharh Akhbar al-Sultan Yamin al-Dawlah wa-Amin al-Millah Mahmud al-Ghaznawi*, ed. I. D. al-Thamiri, Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 2004, p. 385, abridged; Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Manini, *Sharh al-Yamini al-Musamma bi-al-Fath al-Wahbi ala Tarikh Abi Nasr al-'Utbi*, Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Wahabiyah, 1869, vol. 2, pp. 219–221. All translations of 'Utbi in this section have been compared with the relevant sections of H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period*, vol. 5, Calcutta: S. Guptil, 1960 (reprint). I have generally maintained their phrasing except where the meaning was jeopardized.
4 'Utbi, *Yamini*, pp. 30–31; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 1, pp. 74–76, abridged.
5 'Utbi, *Yamini*, pp. 350–351; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, pp. 153–156, slightly abridged.
6 'Abd al-Hayy ibn Zahhak Gardizi, *Zayn al-Akhbar*, ed. A. H. Habibi, Tehran: Intisharat-i Bunyad-i Farhang-i Iran, 1968, p. 190, slightly abridged.
7 Ali ibn Julugh Farrukhi, *Divan-i Hakim Farrukhi-i Sistani*, ed. M. Dabir Siyaqi, Tehran: Muhammad Husayn Iqbal, 1957, p. 51, slightly abridged.
8 'Utbi, *Yamini*, pp. 421–422; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, pp. 305–309, slightly abridged.
9 Farrukhi, *Divan*, pp. 67–72. This specific event in Farrukhi occurs not on the way to but on the way back from India. It was chosen for its relative succinctness. In Farrukhi's other poems, such natural barriers and their crossing occur in the same order as in 'Utbi's arrangement.
10 'Utbi, *Yamini*, p. 279; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, p. 67, slightly abridged.
11 Farrukhi, *Divan*, p. 68.
12 Gardizi, *Zayn*, p. 184.
13 'Utbi, *Yamini*, pp. 279–280; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, p. 68, slightly abridged.
14 Gardizi, *Zayn*, p. 192, slightly abridged.
15 'Utbi, *Yamini*, p. 279, slightly abridged.
16 'Utbi, *Yamini*, p. 281; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, p. 69, slightly abridged.
17 Gardizi, *Zayn*, p. 183.
18 'Utbi, *Yamini*, p. 350; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, p. 152.
19 'Utbi, *Yamini*, p. 301; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, p. 99.
20 'Utbi, *Yamini*, p. 406; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, p. 274.
21 Gardizi, *Zayn*, p. 183.
22 Farrukhi, *Divan*, p. 69.
23 'Utbi, *Yamini*, p. 350; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, p. 152.
24 Gardizi, *Zayn*, p. 192.
25 Abu al-Faraj 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh Umam wa al-Muluk*, ed. N. Zarzur, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub 'Ilmiyah, 1992, p. 84.
26 'Utbi, *Yamini*, pp. 351–352; al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 2, pp. 153–156.
27 Abu al-Fazl Bayhaqi, *Tarikh-i Bayhaqi*, ed. K. Khatib Rahbar, Tehran: Sa'di, 1989, p. 30.
28 Ibid., p. 230.
29 Bayhaqi, *Tarikh*, p. 76.
30 Ibid., pp. 444–446, and for Mahmud, pp. 501.
31 Ibid., p. 681.
32 Ibid., p. 173.
33 Ibid., p. 174.
34 For the earlier history of such topos, see A. Noth with L. Conrad, *The Early*

Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study, trans. M. Bonner, Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1994, pp. 134–135.

35 For the Tabari translation, see E. L. Daniel, 'Bal'ami account of early Islamic History', in F. Daftary and J. W. Meri (eds), *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, London: Tauris, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2003, pp. 163–189; ibid. 'Manuscripts and editions of Bal'ami's Tarjamah-i Tarikh-i Tabari', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1990, no. ii, pp. 282–321; and A. C. J. Peacock, *Mediaeval Islamic Historiography and Political Legitimacy: Bal'ami's Tarikh'namah*, London: Routledge, 2007.

36 Ahmad ibn Muhammad Tha'labi, *Qisas al-Anbiya' al-Musamma bi 'Ara'is al-Majalis*, ed. A. Yafi'i, Egypt: Maktabat al-Jumhuriyah al-'Arabiyah, [19–], pp. 111–112, 135–139; ibid. *'Ara'is al-Majalis fi Qisas al-Anbiya' or Lives of the Prophets*, trans. W. M. Brinner, Leiden: Brill, 2002, pp. 327–329, 399–400 and 403–407. On Tha'labi, see W. A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsir Tradition: The Quran Commentary of al-Tha'labi*, Leiden: Brill, 2004. For Tha'labi and the genre of the 'tales of the prophets' see T. Nagel, 'Die Qisas al-Anbiya': Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte', dissertation, Bonn 1967; and J. Pauliny, *'Einige Bemerkungen zu den Werken 'Qisas al-anbiy'*, in *Graecolatina et Orientalia*, vol. 1, 1969, pp. 111–123.

37 Koran, 2:57.

38 Tha'labi, *Qisas*, p. 137 (Arabic text)/403 (English translation).

39 Abu al-Qasim Hasan 'Unsuri, *Divan-i Ustad 'Unsuri-i Balkhi*, ed. M. Dabir Siyaqi, Tehran: Kitabkhanah-i Sana'i, 1963, p. 75.

40 Farrukhi, *Divan*, p. 34.

41 Farrukhi, *Divan*, p. 63.

42 Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi, *Shahnamah*, ed. J. Khaliqi Mutlaq, New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1987, vol. 1: p. 44, slightly abridged.

43 Tha'labi, *Qisas*, pp. 139–140 (Arabic text)/p. 410 (English translation).

44 Ibid, p. 204 (Arabic text)/p. 609 (translation).

45 Farrukhi, *Divan*, pp. 67–68.

46 See, for example, Bayhaqi's very similar comments made some 20 years later in his own *History*.

47 Farrukhi, *Divan*, p. 35.

48 Tha'labi, *Qisas*, p. 204 (Arabic text)/p. 611 (English translation), abridged.

49 Bayhaqi, *Tarikh*, p. 713.

50 Ibid., p. 256.

51 Ibid., p. 727.

52 W. Madelung, 'The assumption of the title of Shahanshah by the Buyids' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 28, 1969, pp. 92–93 and 100; W. L. Treadwell, 'Shahanshah and al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad: the legitimation of power in Samanid and Buyid Iran', in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, ed. F. Daftary and J. W. Meri., London: Tauris, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2003, p. 329.

53 J. Paul, *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vormongolischer Zeit*, Stuttgart: In Kommission bei F. Steiner, 1996, p. 117.

4 Inventing the image of the 'founder king'

1 A. Anooshahr, 'Utbi and the Ghaznavids at the foot of the mountain', *Iranian Studies*, vol. 38, 2005, pp. 271–291; and A. C. J. Peacock, 'Utbi's al-Yamini: Patronage, Composition and Reception', *Arabica*, vol. 54, 2007, pp. 500–525.

2 D. G. Tor has recently shown in her *Violent Order: Religious Warfare, Chivalry, and the 'Ayyar Phenomenon in the Medieval Islamic World*, Würzburg: Orient-

Instituts Istanbul, 2007 that Sistani hero Ya'qub ib. Layth was one of the earliest of such ghazi kings, though his reputation was not as enduring as that of the Ghaznavids. All the while, as it will be argued in this chapter, certain topoi used by Arab historians in depicting Ya'qub would equally apply to Sebüktegin.

3 Altered and abridged from Tabari, *The Crisis of the Abbasid Caliphate*, trans. G. Saliba, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985, pp. 157–158.

4 Altered and abridged from Tabari, *Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the Abbasid Caliphate*, trans. C. E. Bosworth, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991, vol. 33, pp. 11–12.

5 On Mas'udi in general, see T. Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: the Histories of Mas'udi*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1975; A. al-Azmah, *Al-Mas'udi*, Beirut: Riyaad al-Rayyis lil-Kutub wa-al-Nashr, 2001; and H. 'Asi, *Abu al-Hasan al-Mas'udi: al-Mu'arrikh wa al-Jughrafi*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1993.

6 Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab wa Mada'in al-Jawhar*, ed. M. M. Qumayhah, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2004, vol. 4, p. 99.

7 Ibid., p. vol. 2, p. 334.

8 Ibid., p. vol. 4, pp. 107–108, abridged.

9 See also M. Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: The Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Ma'mun*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, with regards to the Caliph Ma'mun and the eights Shiite Imam Ali al-Rida.

10 For Bugha and the Turkic slaves of the Abbasids, see M. Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra, A.H. 200–275/815–889 C.E.*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001, as well as P. B. Golden, 'Khazar Turkic Ghulams in Caliphal Service', *Journal Asiatique*, 2004, vol. 292, pp. 279–309.

11 Mas'udi, *Muruj*, vol. 4, p. 210.

12 M. Gordon, *Breaking*, p. 89.

13 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Jabbar al-'Utbi, *al-Yamini fi Sharh Akhbar al-Sultan Yamin al-Dawlah wa-Amin al-Millah Mahmud al-Ghaznawi*, ed. I. D. al-Thamiri, Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah, 2004, pp. 20–21; Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Manini, *Sharh al-Yamini al-Musamma bi-al-Fath al-Wahbi ala Tarikh Abi Nasr al-'Utbi*, Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Wahabiyah, 1869, vol. 1, pp. 60–62.

14 Anooshahr, 'Utbi'.

15 'Utbi, *Yamini*, pp. 14–15, al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 1, p. 22.

16 al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 1, pp. 62–63.

17 al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 1, pp. 256–258.

18 al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 1, pp. 35, 76 and 85.

19 al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 1, p. 73.

20 al-Manini, *Sharh*, vol. 1, p. 85.

21 J. Chabbi, 'Remarques sur le développement historique des mouvements ascétiques ey mystiques au Khurasan', *Studia Islamica*, 1977, vol. 46, pp. 5–77; 'Réflexions sur le Soufisme iranien primitif', *Journal Asiatique*, 1978, vol. 266, pp. 37–55; C. Melchert, 'The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.', *Studia Islamica*, 1996, vol. 83, pp. 51–70; 'Sufis and Competing Movements in Nishapur, 9th–10th Centuries C.E.', *Iran*, 2001, vol. 39, pp. 237–247.

22 The scholarly belief in the missionary Sufis who converted the pagan Turks of inner Asia has been challenged by J. Paul in his 'Nouvelles pistes pour la recherché sur l'histoire de l'Asie centrale à l'époque karakhanide (Xe-début XIIIe siècle),' *Cahiers D'Asie Centrale 9: Études Karakhanides*, Tachkent: IFEAC; Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 2001, pp. 19–22. My argument here will agree with his

thesis, for I am suggesting that this conversion account shows the slave coming to towns and being converted there.

23 R. W. Bulliet, in his *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), mostly avoided conversion narratives and instead relied on name-changes recorded in biographical dictionaries. M. Morony, in his 'The Age of Conversions: A Reassessment' (in M. Gervers and J. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and Continuity. Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth centuries*, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990, pp. 135–150) criticized Bulliet for abandoning one set of literary sources in favor of merely another, suggesting that all the anecdotes in literary sources and narratives should be used in spite of their contradictory natures. Many of these cases do refer to Khurasan, Afghanistan and Central Asia.
24 Cooperson, *Classical*, p. 167.
25 J. Freccero, 'Autobiography and Narrative', in T. C. Heller, M. Sosna and D. E. Wellbery (eds), *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986, p. 17.
26 Ibid., p. 19.
27 Abu al-Fazl Bayhaqi, *Tarikh-i Bayhaqi*, (ed.) K. Khatib Rahbar, Tehran: Sa'di, 1989, p. 152.
28 M. Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography*, Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1980, p. 176.
29 Unidentified. Presumably in northwest Afghanistan.
30 Bayhaqi, *Tarikh*, pp. 247–249.
31 In the reverse direction, people traveled from Nishapur to Sarakhs in six days, from Sarakhs to Marw in five, from Marw to Marw al-Rudh in six days, and from Marw al-Rudh to the Oxus (through Guzganan) in thirteen – about a month in total; Ibrahim ibn Muhammad Istakhri, *Masalik wa Mamalik*, Cairo: Dar al-Qalam, 1961, p. 158.
32 Ibid., p. 158.
33 Al-Maqdisi, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum: Vol. 3 Descriptio Imperil Moslemici*, (ed.) De Goeje, Lugduni Batavorum: E. J. Brill, 1870–94, p. 325.
34 In today's Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.
35 *Hudud al-'Alam*, (ed.) M. Sutudah, Tehran: Kitabkhanah-Tahuri, 1983, p. 112.
36 Ibid., p. 117.
37 Istakhri, *Masalik*, p. 189.
38 Ibid., p. 157.
39 Ibid., pp. 188–189.
40 Muhammad ibn Ali Hakim al-Tirmidhi, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two Works by al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi*, annotated trans. and intro. B. Radtke and J. O'Kane, Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996, pp. 16–17.
41 Ibid., p. 10.
42 See, for example, his wandering in the wilderness outside of town into seclusion (Ibid., pp. 17–18).
43 Ibid., p. 18.
44 Ibid., p. 30.
45 Ibid., p. 21.
46 Ibid., p. 23.
47 Ibid., p. 125.
48 Muhammad ibn al-Husayn Sulami, *Tabaqat Sufiyah*, (ed.) N. Shuraybah, Cairo: Maktabat al-Khaniji, Cairo: 1969, p. 217.
49 Ibid., p. 103.
50 Ibid., p. 91.

51 Ibid., p. 61.
52 Ibid., p. 61.
53 Ibid., p. 30.
54 Ibid., pp. 31–32.
55 Bayhaqi, *Tarikh*, pp. 249–250.
56 Ali ibn Usman Hujviri, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, (ed.) V. Zhukovski, Tehran: Kitabkhanah-Tahuri, 1979, p. 128.
57 Ibid., pp. 41 and 141.
58 Bayhaqi, *Tarikh*, p. 878.
59 Ibid., p. 877.
60 Ibid., p. 935.
61 Ibid., p. 901.
62 Ibid., p. 908.
63 Ibid., p. 910.
64 Ibid., p. 937.
65 Ibid., pp. 966–967.

5 The triad of kings

1 E. A. Davidovich, 'Karakhanids', in A. H. Dani and V. M. Masson (eds), *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: Vol. 4, The Age of Achievement, A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century: Part 1, The Historical, Social and Economic Setting*, Paris: UNESCO, 1992, p. 131.
2 Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, (ed.) R. R. Arat, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, vol. 1, 1947, lines 4227 and 5484–5488. On this text see R. Dankoff *Wisdom of Royal Glory: a Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983, as well as H. Inalcik, 'Turkish and Iranian political theories and traditions in Kutadgu Bilig', in *The Middle East and the Balkans Under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Turkish Studies 1993, pp. 1–18.
3 Yusuf Khass Hajib, *Kutadgu*, line 3982.
4 Ibid., lines 5489–5490.
5 Ibid., lines 6481–6482.
6 Abu al-Fazl Bayhaqi, *Tarikh-i Bayhaqi*, (ed.) K. Khatib Rahbar, Tehran: Sa'di, 1989, p. 754.
7 Bayhaqi, *Tarikh*, p. 757.
8 Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyar al-Muluk ya Siyasatname*, (ed.) H. Darke, Tehran: Bungah-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitab, 1962, p. 140.
9 Ibid., p. 158.
10 R. B. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 82–93. J. Paul *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vormongolischer Zeit*, Stuttgart: In Kommission bei F. Steiner, 1996, especially pp. 172–178.
11 Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasat'namah*, p. 139.
12 Ibid., p. 148.
13 Ibid., pp. 149–150.
14 For example, his use of the account of the Mazdakites for making his points about the Ismailis.
15 Bayhaqi, *Tarikh*, p. 673.
16 Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasat'namah*, pp. 153–154.
17 Kaykavus b. Iskandar b. Qabus, *Qabus'namah*, Tehran, p. 232.
18 Presumably nomadic people in the area of today's Baluchistan shared between Iran and Pakistan.

19 Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasat'namah*, p. 86.
20 Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Nasawi, *Sirat Jalal al-Din Minkubirni*, (ed.) Z. M. Buniiatova, Moscow, Izdatel'skaia firma 'Vostochnaia lit-ra' RAN, 1996, p. 133.
21 Ibid., p. 3.
22 Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Manini, *Sharh al-Yamini al-Musamma bi-al-Fath al-Wahbi ala Tarikh Abi Nasr al-'Uthi*, Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Wahabiyah, 1869, vol. 1, pp. 40 and 47.
23 Koran, 104: 6–7.
24 Nasawi, *Sirat*, p. 66; al-Manini, vol. 2, p. 69.
25 Nasawi, *Sirat*, p. 254.
26 al-Manini, vol. 1, p. 23.
27 Nasawi, *Sirat*, p. 251, al-Manini, vol. 1, p. 75.
28 Nasawi, *Sirat*, p. 24.
29 al-Manini, vol. 1, p. 66.
30 Nasawi, *Sirat*, p. 127.
31 See M. Minuvi's remarks in his introduction to his edition of the anonymous Persian translation of the *Sirat*, p. 'mw': anonymous, *Sirat Jalal al-Din Minkubirni*, Tehran: Bungah-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitab, 1965.
32 Anonymous, *Sirat*, p. 248.
33 The information about Ibn Bibi's family comes from the comments made in his own text: Nasir al-Din Husayn Ibn Bibi *Kitab al-Avamir al-'Ala'iyah fi al-Umur al-'Alaiyah*, intro. A. S. Erzi, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1956, pp. 442–444.
34 On the political history of the Seljuks of Rūm, the following works remain essential: C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History, c.1071–1330*, trans. J. Jones-Williams, New York, NY: Taplinger Pub. Co., 1968, pp. 292–293; a newer translation is by P. M. Holt, *The Formation of Turkey: The Seljukid Sultanate of Rūm: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century*, Harlow: Longman, 2001. S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh Through the Fifteenth Century*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971; O. Turan, *Selçuklar Zamanında Türkiye: Siyâsi Tarih Alp Arslan'dan Osman Gazi'ye 1071–1318*, Istanbul: Turan Neşriyat Yurdu 1971; A. G. C. Savvides, *Byzantium in the Near East: Its Relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm in Asia Minor, the Armenians of Cilicia and the Mongols A.D. c.1192–1237*, Thessalonike: Kentpon Byzantinon Epeynon, 1981; G. Leiser (trans. and ed.), *A History of the Seljuks: Ibrahim Kafeşoğlu's Interpretation and the Resultant Controversy*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.
35 Ibn Bibi, *Kitab al-Avamir*, p. 116.
36 Ibid., p. 36.
37 Ibid., pp. 52–53.
38 Ibid., p. 45.
39 Ibid., pp. 47–48.
40 Ibid., p. 94.
41 Ibid., pp. 102–109.
42 Ibid., pp. 95–101, specifically called ghaza on p. 101.
43 Ibid., pp. 91–92 abridged.
44 Ibid., p. 223 abridged.
45 Ibid., p. 228 slightly abridged.
46 Ibid., p. 228 abridged.
47 Ibid., p. 462.
48 Ibid., pp. 470 and 478.

49 Ibid., p. 473.
50 Ibid., pp. 499–500.
51 Ibid., p. 531.
52 Ibid., p. 521.
53 Ibid., p. 523.
54 Ibid., pp. 525–526.

6 Tatars and Ottomans

1 For an analysis of Timur's reign at the time of this invasion, see especially the works of B. F. Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, and T. Nagel, *Timur der Eroberer und die islamische Welt des späten Mittelalters*, München: C.H. Beck, 1993.
2 A. H. Navai, *Asnad va Mukatibat-i Tarikh-i Iran az Timur ta Shah Ismail*, Tehran: Bungah Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitab, 1977, pp. 69–70.
3 J. Woods, 'Timurid historiography', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 1987, vol. 46, p. 85.
4 Nizam al-Din Shami, *Zafarnamah*, (ed.) F. Tauer, Tehran: Intisharat-Bamdad (reprint), 1984, p. 11.
5 Ibid., pp. 170–171, slightly abridged.
6 E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia: Vol. III. The Tartar Dominion (1265–1502)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929, pp. 203–206, 401.
7 M. Halil, 'Feridun Beg Münşeati', in *Tarih-i Osmani, Encümeni Mecmuası*, no. 77, pp. 162–165.
8 J. H. Mordtmann, 'Feridun Beg' in *Encyclopedia of Islam* 1, vol. 4, 1925; F. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke*, Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1927, p. 107.
9 Edhem, 32.
10 J. Rypka, 'Briefwechsel der Hohen Pforte mit den Krimchanen', in T. Menzel (ed.), *Festschrift Georg Jacob*, Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1932, pp. 241–247. The one exception was the first letter in this list, attributed to Bayezid II, which Rypka thought had been fabricated later.
11 K. Holter, 'Studien zu Ahmed Feridun's Münşeat esselatin', *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung*, Erg.-Bd. xiv, Innsbruck 1939, p. 437.
12 L. Fekete. 'Das Fethname über die Schlacht bei Varna (Zur Kritik Feriduns)' *Byzantinoslavica*, vol. 14, 1953. pp. 258–270.
13 *'fī awā'il shahr sha'bān al-mu'azzam 798'*, Feridun Bey, 125.
14 Ruler. The application of this title to the Byzantine emperor, as opposed to Caesar, by both the Ottomans and the Seljuks, might imply their rival claim to the title of 'Caesar of Rūm'.
15 Feridun Bey, *Münşeat us-Selatin*, Istanbul (?), 1858, vol. 1, p. 125.
16 Ibid., p. 119.
17 Ibid., p. 120.
18 Koran, 88: 24–25.
19 Feridun Bey, *Münşeat*, p. 121; abridged. This letter is also quoted in Ibn 'Arabshah, but therein the text is longer. It is unlikely that it was Feridun Bey who abridged the text, given his proclivity for encyclopedic accumulation.
20 Ibid., p. 125.
21 Ibid., p. 121.
22 Ibid., p. 126.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.
26 'Aziz b. Ardashir Astarabadi, *Bazm va Razm*, (ed.) M. Halil, Istanbul: Evkaf Matbaasi, 1928, p. 382.
27 Feridun Bey, *Münşeat*, p. 127, abridged.
28 V. L. Ménage, 'Some Notes on the "devshirme"', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1966, vol. 29, p. 64.
29 Şevket Pamuk, *Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 28–29.
30 Feridun Bey, Münşeat, p. 38–127
31 This statement seems to be a rejoinder to a statement of Timur, not quoted in Feridun Bey but attested in the *Zafarnamah* of Shami (see Navai *Asnad*, p. 97, where Timur calls Bayezid the descendant of 'Turcoman sailors').
32 Mountain-range in present-day northern Iran.
33 Feridun Bey, *Münşeat*, pp. 127–128, abridged.
34 *Malāz al-ghuzzāt wa al-mujāhidīn*, ibid., p. 128.
35 Ibid., p. 129, abridged.
36 On this battle, as well as other matters regarding Timur in Anatolia, see especially M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La Campagne de Timur en Anatolie, 1402*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1977.
37 Karim al-Din Mahmud al-Aksarai, *Musamirat al-Akhbar va Musayirat al-Akhyar*, (ed.) O. Turan, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1944, pp. 71 and 112.
38 Ibid., pp. 97, 123 and 114.
39 Ibid., p. 98.
40 Ibid., p. 47.
41 Ibid., p. 44.
42 Ibid., pp. 52 and 56.
43 Ibid., p. 118.
44 Aksarai had confused Kaykhusraw II with 'Izz al-Din Kaykavus II.
45 Aksarai, *Musamirat*, pp. 42–44.
46 He had become *parvānah* following Nizam al-Din's death (Ibid., p. 45).
47 Ibid., p. 83.
48 Ibid., p. 327.
49 H. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003, pp. 35–42.
50 Astarabadi, *Bazm*, p. 336.
51 Ibid., p. 387.
52 Ibid., p. 509.
53 Ibid., pp. 79, 112 and 117.
54 Ibid., p. 382.
55 Ibid., p. 45.
56 Ibid., p. 450.
57 Ibid., p. 451.
58 Ibid.
59 Ahmed Şikâri, *Şikârinin Karaman Oğulları Tarihi*, (ed.) M. Koman, Konya: Yeni Kitab Basımevi, 1946, p. 15.
60 Ibid., p. 10.
61 Because here Yarijani's patron 'Ala al-Din dies.
62 Şikâri, *Karaman*, pp. 16, 49, 60 and 107.
63 Ibid., p. 60.
64 Ibid., p. 49.
65 Astarabadi, *Bazm*, pp. 17 and 20.
66 Ahmedi, 'Ahmedi's History of the Ottoman dynasty', ed. K. Sılay, *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 1992, vol. 16, lines 269–272.

67 T. Kortantamer, *Leben und Weltbild des altosmanischen Dichters Ahmedi unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seines Diwans*, Freiburg im Breslau: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1973, pp. 312–333.
68 T. Seif, 'Der Abschnitt über die Osmanen in Šükrüllah's persischer Universalgeschichte', *Mitteilungen zur osmanischen Geschichte*, no. 2, 1926, p. 98.
69 C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Contruction of the Ottoman State*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 111.
70 D. Kastritsis, 'The Ottoman Interregnum', dissertation, Harvard University, 2005, p. 210.
71 Ibid., p. 284.

7 The ghazas of Sultan Murad II

1 See İnalcık's article 'Mehemmed I', *Encyclopedia of Islam 2*, Leiden: Brill.
2 Not exclusively, of course. He had other 'myths' to tap into.
3 *'awāsit dhī al-hijja 818 {AH}'* Feridun Bey, *Münşeat us-Selatin*, Istanbul (?), 1858, vol. 1, p. 150.
4 Ibid., p. 151.
5 Ibid., p. 161.
6 Ibid., p. 162.
7 Ibid., p. 158.
8 Ibid., p. 159.
9 Koran, 40: 16.
10 Koran, 30: 2–3.
11 Koran, 30: 3.
12 Feridun Bey, *Münşeat*, p. 151.
13 Ibid., p. 161.
14 Ibid., p. 161.
15 S. Sreckovic, *Akches: Volume One, Osman Gazi – Murad II*, Belgrade: Sreckovic, 1999, p. 87.
16 A. Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimarisinin İlk Devri*, Istanbul: Baha Matbaasi, 1966, vol. 2, pp. 21–22.
17 Cited in C. Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 104.
18 For a list of titles, by no means exhaustive, see İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 1, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1947, pp. 539–542.
19 See S. Nafisi's introduction to his 1963 edition of the *Kitab-i Nasihat'namah: Ma'ruf bi Qabusnamah*, Tehran: Furughi, 5th edition, 1983, p. 'k', where he places this translation between 1421 and 1423.
20 Mercimek Ahmet, *Kabusname*, (ed.) O. Ş. Gökay, Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1941, p. 3.
21 UCLA Department of Special Collections, *Collection 896: Turkish Manuscripts*, manuscript 169, folio 242a. I know of three manuscripts of this text held at UCLA's special collections. The oldest (#61) is probably from the fifteenth century and is illustrated, but has unfortunately suffered damage and is missing several folios. The second oldest (#169) dates to 1635 and is complete. This text agrees very closely with the former manuscript, but there is water damage on certain leaves and this makes the reading of particular words somewhat difficult. A third manuscript (#191) is dated to 1719. The handwriting is a very clear and legible Naskh. The language of this version, however, is 'modernized', and many archaic words have been altered. This manuscript should be used with caution when it is referred to for clarifying certain obscurities in the former two versions.
22 Mss. 169, folio 11b.

23 Mss. 169, folio 201b.
24 M. T. Houtsma, 'Préface', in Yazıcıoğlu Ali, *Histoire des Seldjoucides D'Asie Mineure D'Apres Ibn-Bibi: Texte Turc Publie´ d'Apre`s les Mss. de Leiden et de Paris*, Leiden: Brill, 1902, pp. v–vi.
25 Ibid., pp. 87, 372 and 382 of the Houtsma edition.
26 P. Wittek, 'Miscellanea', *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, no. 14, 1964, pp. 263–265; thus overturning Houtsma and Duda's dating.
27 Anonymous, *Battalname*, (ed. and trans.) Y. Dedes, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 85.
28 Ibid., p. 10, f. 30a.
29 P. Boratav, 'Battal', *İslam Ansiklopedesi*.
30 *Battalname*, A, p. 274.
31 Ibid., p. 284.
32 Ibid., p. 311.
33 Ibid., pp. 300, 422 and 423.
34 Page 57 of I. Melikoff's introduction to her edition and translation *La Geste de Melik Danis,mend: Étude Critique du Danis,mendname*, (ed.) I. Melikoff, Paris: De´positaire: A. Maisonneuve, 1960.
35 See Imber, *Ottoman Empire 1300–1481*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1990, pp. 118–120.
36 Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks*, (trans.) H. J. Magoulias, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975.
37 Ibid., pp. 180–181.
38 As pointed out by Imber in his 'Ottoman Dynastic Myth', *Turcica*, 1987, vol. 19, pp. 7–27.
39 H. İnalcik, *Fatih Devresi Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikara*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1954.
40 Doukas states that Musa won the support of nobles in Rumeli by restarting religiously inspired campaigns against the various Christian kingdoms (pp. 107–108). The anonymous chronicler also writes that even after the beys of Rumeli abandoned Musa, the only people who remained with him were the akıncı (p. 52).
41 See Dimitri J. Kastritsis's dissertation 'The Ottoman Interregnum', Harvard University, 2005, especially pp. 162 and 185.
42 See Imber's *Ottoman Empire 1300–1481* for an overview of the period.
43 See İnalcık's article 'Murad II', *İslam Ansiklopedesi*, especially p. 599. The Germiyan territory was, however, annexed in 1428/9.
44 D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984, pp. 386–388.
45 C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1650: The Structure of Power*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 257.
46 Ibid., p. 259.
47 C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Contruction of the Ottoman State*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 146–149.
48 Yazıcıoğlu Ali, *Histoire des Seldjoucides*, p. 9.
49 Ibid.
50 *Battalname*, starting from the second chapter, A, p. 8.
51 Yazıcıoğlu Ali, *Histoire des Seldjoucides*, p. 144.
52 Ibid., p. 127.
53 Nasir al-Din Husayn Ibn Bibi, *Kitab al-Avamir al-'Ala'iyah fi al-Umur al-'Alaiyah*, (ed.) A. S. Erzi, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1956, p. 164.
54 Ibid., p. 144.

55 Ibid., p. 107.
56 Yazıcıoğlu Ali, *Histoire des Seldjoucides*, p. 92.
57 Ibn Bibi, *Kitab al-Avamir*, p. 303.
58 Ibid., p. 76.
59 Yazıcıoğlu Ali, *Histoire des Seldjoucides*, p. 62.
60 The author refers to Murad as already dead, but does not mention the conquest of Constantinople.
61 C. Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300–1480*, p. 3.
62 *Battalname*, A, p. 129, translation slightly altered.
63 Anonymous, *Gazavat-ı Sultan Murad b. Mehemmed Han: İzladi ve Varna Savaşları (1443–1444) Üzerinde Anonim Gazavatname*, (ed.) H. İnalcık and M. Oğuz, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1978, ff. 2b–3a.
64 Y. Dedes in his *Battalname*, p. 618.
65 Mélikoff, Irene *La Geste*, p. 198.
66 *Battalname*, A, p. 50.
67 Ibid., pp. 162–163.
68 *Gazavat*, f. 3a.
69 *Battalname*, A, p. 329.
70 *Gazavat*, f. 56b.
71 Ibid., p. 2b.
72 Ibid., p. 51b.
73 *Battalname*, A, p. 171.
74 *Gazavat*, f. 6a.
75 *Battalname*, A, p. 226.
76 Ibid., pp. 325–326.
77 *Gazavat*, f. 57b.
78 Yazıcıoğlu Ali, *Histoire des Seldjoucides*, p. 321.
79 Ibid., p. 335.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., p. 336.
82 Ibid., p. 211.
83 Murad's naming his oldest and favorite son 'Ala al-Din, I think, also goes towards this idea of a second incarnation of sorts.
84 Feridun Bey, *Münşeat*, pp. 177–178.
85 Ibid., pp. 178–179.
86 Koran, 8: 12.
87 Feridun Bey, *Münşeat*, p. 181.
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8 Conclusion

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